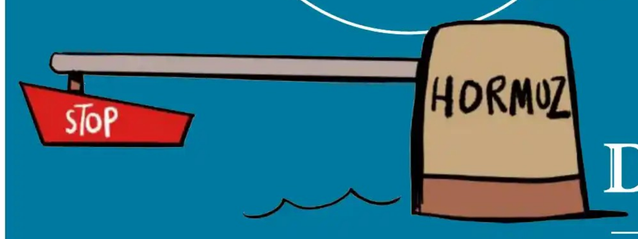
DH on Saturday

DECCAN HERALD
The Power of Good

WHACKY VERSE

Close dose

Even before Trump raided Iran
He imagined a ruined Tehran.
Didn't he even know
His civilisational foe—
Would deploy a Hormuz plan?



Govt may review 5 cr minor offence cases

More than 1,000 such violations decriminalised via Jan Vishwas Bill, says Goyal

P13

When hornbills found my mini jungle

The SATURDAY STORY

A garden alive with flowers, birds, and life is a dream for many. In Shivamogga, a doctor, is living that dream. On an empty plot next to his home, he has grown a 'mini jungle'. It is now visited by over 30 species of birds, including his favourite, the hornbill.

Full story, Page 15

2 US warplanes crash in Gulf, 2 pilots rescued

IRAN DEFIANT: Tehran rejects US plan for 48-hr truce

WASHINGTON, AFP

Hours after a US warplane went down over Iran, a second US Air Force combat plane crashed in the Persian Gulf region on Friday and one pilot each was rescued in the two incidents.

As Iranian and American forces were racing each other on Friday to recover the second crew member of the first US jet crash, Tehran rejected a US proposal for a 48-hour ceasefire.

Reporting on the day's earlier crash, Axios and CBS News, citing unidentified sources, said that one of the two crew members on the plane had already been rescued by US special forces but that the search was ongoing for the second crew member.

According to The New York Times and Wall Street Journal, the plane was an F-15E fighter, which is crewed by a pilot and a weapons-systems officer in the back seat.

CNN also said that analysis of what Iranian media said were photos of the wreckage showed an F-15, rather than an F-35 stealth fighter, as claimed in some Iranian reports.

US media reported that President Donald Trump had been briefed on the situation.

However, there was no immediate on-the-record response from the White House or Pentagon to requests for comment.

US media reported that a search-and-rescue operation was underway by specialised US forces.

Iran deployed troops and offered a bounty as it launched a hunt for the US pilot.

"Dear and honourable people of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, if you capture the enemy pilot or pilots alive and hand them over to the police and military forces, you will receive a valuable reward and bonus," said an Iranian television reporter on the official local channel.

Iran fired on targets across the region, setting Kuwait's Mina al-Ahmadi oil refinery on fire. The Kuwait Petroleum Corp said firefighters were working to control several blazes. Kuwait also said an Iranian attack caused "material damage" to a desalination plant.

The Israeli military said it had launched a wave of strikes in Tehran on Friday.

A bridge damaged by Israel in Iran on Friday. REUTERS

LATEST ON WEST ASIA

- 5 Indians among 12 injured by missile debris in Abu Dhabi
- Ship with Iranian oil shifts course from India to China
- One dead after fire in Abu Dhabi from intercepted attack
- Russia offers to scale up crude oil, LNG supplies to India
- Three tankers, including one co-owned by a Japanese company, cross Strait of Hormuz

LPG crisis acute, half of B'luru pumps shut

AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

The LPG crisis in Bengaluru is deepning, with nearly half of the city's gas stations shutting down.

Total Gas has shut down all its outlets, while stations run by Surya Gas and Super Gas are running dry as early as noon.

Even outlets operated by Hindustan Petroleum and Bharat Petroleum were seen turning drivers away as queues stretched up to 3 km on Friday.

Prices have surged sharply and now vary widely.

▸ LPG, Page 8

Auto-rickshaws line up near a fuel station at Girinagar in Bengaluru on Friday. DH PHOTO/B K JANARDHAN

US can take Strait with more time: Trump | White House seeks $1.5 tn defence budget | Hegseth fires top US Army general in new shake-up | UNSC to vote on resolution today P.12

Mamata blames Owaisi for gherao of judicial officers

KOLKATA, DHNS: Amid arrest of a lawyer and others over the recent confinement of seven judicial officers in West Bengal, Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee on Friday took a dig at AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi, calling him "BJP's cuckoo from Hyderabad" and blaming him for incident in Malda district.

The NIA launched an investigation into the confinement of the judicial officers engaged in the SIR of the electoral rolls, even as the police arrested a lawyer, allegedly linked with the AIMIM.

The police arrested over 30 other persons from across Malda in connection with 19 cases registered over the confinement of the judicial officers and the road blockades during the protests.

▸ Mamata, Page 8

Confusion over rural job scheme triggers migration

VITTAL SHASTRI
KALABURAGI, DHNS

Lack of work under the rural employment guarantee scheme has prompted people in many parts of the state, particularly the North Karnataka region, to migrate to cities in search of livelihoods.

Zilla panchayats have not approved action plans though gram panchayats had submitted them several months ago. As a result, many landless and marginal farmers have set out to seek work in sectors like construction in cities like Bengaluru, Mumbai and Pune.

Zilla panchayat officials cite a lack of clarity from the government on the scheme and say they are engaging workers for pending work from the previous year.

> The Union government has not given clarity on the scheme. We have written multiple times to the Centre and also spoken to the Union minister in this connection. The Centre has only sought the possible expenditure up to April.
>
> **Priyank Kharge**
> RDPR Minister

Across the state, districts have projected 1.30 crore person-days of work for April. However, participation in the scheme has declined in recent years: 30.39 lakh individuals worked under it in 2025–26, compared to 51.7 lakh in 2024–25, 54.2 lakh in 2023–24, and 53.16 lakh in 2022–23.

▸ Migration, Page 8

Re-examine switch from marks to grades: Governor

BENGALURU, DHNS: Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot has asked the state government to reconsider its decision to replace marks with grades for the third language subject in Class 10.

In a letter to Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh, the Lok Bhavan has said that the government should have this decision "comprehensively examined".

On March 27, minister Madhu Bangarappa announced that students will not be awarded a score for the third language subject, which carries 100 marks. Instead, they will get grades. With this, students will be scored out of 525 marks and not 625.

▸ Gehlot, Page 8

PRIME SPACE

House prices up as B'lureans seek premium living

MAHESH KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

Increasing demand for larger houses configured with premium features, strong infrastructure, better connectivity, and a well-developed social ecosystem is driving housing price growth in Bengaluru.

During the first quarter of 2026, ending March, the city witnessed a strong 14% growth in residential housing prices.

According to NoBroker, property prices in various micro markets of Bengaluru rose 14% in the January-March quarter this year, compared to the same quarter last year. Prices moved up from Rs 9,199 per sq ft in Q1 2025 to Rs 10,531 per sq ft in Q1 2026, reflecting the supply shift toward larger, premium configurations.

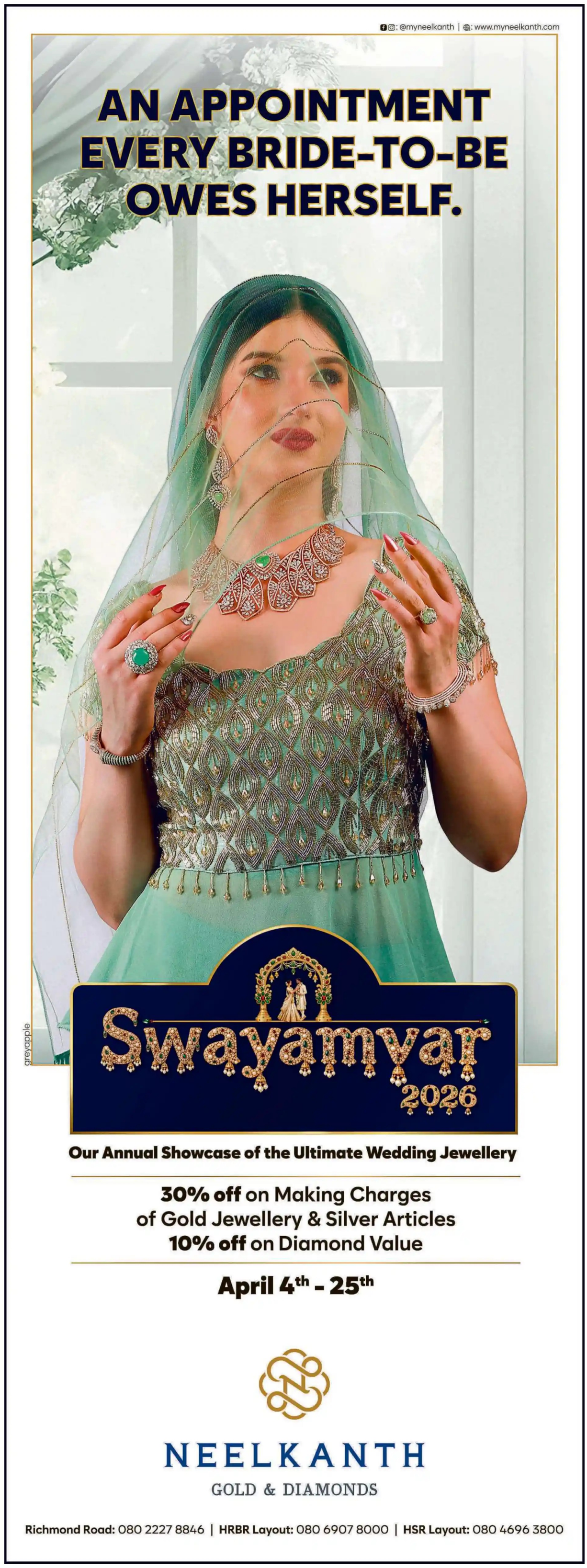
"Real estate prices in Bengaluru are surging due to a mix of strong demand, limited supply, and structural factors. High-income IT and finance professionals are driving demand. Increased prices of materials like steel and cement, along with labour costs, are also pushing up property prices," Saurabh Garg, co-founder and CBO of NoBroker told *DH*.

"Pricing in Bengaluru also remains highly micro-market specific. Factors such as location, social infrastructure, and product differentiation play a critical role. Well-positioned developments can continue to command a premium, while the broader market remains steady. Overall, supported by strong employment drivers and continued office absorption, we remain confident of stable demand and pricing in the near to medium term," Mallanna Sasalu, CEO – South, Puravankara Limited, said.

Developers are focusing more on luxury projects, reducing affordable housing supply to cater to the affluent class. Premium homebuyers in Bengaluru today seek spacious 3 and 4 BHK configurations that go beyond size to deliver an experience-led lifestyle.

They prefer homes with higher carpet area efficiency, plus rooms for work-from-home or guests, wide balconies/sundecks, and in larger units, servant quarters.

▸ Premium houses, Page 8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GROWTH PANGS OF GARDEN CITY

Commercial use of residential lanes, a problem with no remedy

For years, zonal rules laid out by master plans have been flouted in Bengaluru. With the city gearing up for a new master plan, what's the way forward?

Commercial operations in residential areas can lead to parking problems, chaos and other issues for locals. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

Once a calm residential bylane, the 16th Main Road in Koramangala 4th block has now become a busy road. A residential building in the lane has now been converted into an office space housing over 50 employees. On any given working day, over 20 two-wheelers are parked in front of the house, and people keep walking around, leaving the local residents wondering about the change.

While the Revised Master Plan-2015 (RMP-2015) lays down zoning regulations that do not allow commercial activities, barring a few basic shops like grocery stores and milk booths, and roads less than 40-feet wide in Bengaluru, many residential areas are seeing a spurt in large commercial establishments like offices and pubs, with drastic growth over the last few years.

Such zonal violations pose many problems and challenges for citizens. The roads get so busy that they affect residents' daily life.

"Residential areas are classified as such to provide some privacy to people. Now, the office space in front of our house makes it so difficult for us to just go outside and walk along the street, since office-goers are always crossing the street, on their phones, and some even hold meetings. This has completely changed the environment of the street," said Gilbert M N, a resident of Koramangala.

The problem is rampant in areas such as Koramangala and Indiranagar, which have experienced significant growth and are close to designated commercial areas. People here are aware enough to complain about it.

In Indiranagar, for instance, a small area — the HAL 2nd stage, a residential area, has as many as 50 commercial establishments against which local residents are fighting.

"It is not just a matter of privacy or the implementation of the rules. Such establishments also pose security concerns. There are offices with over 50 people working in them, and eateries with hundreds of visitors. How do we ensure security in residential areas in such conditions?" said Venkatesh V, a member of the HAL 2nd stage Resident Welfare Association (RWA).

When peace takes a hit

From simply being unable to take an afternoon nap to fearing a brawl, the residents of these areas say they have had to live with the constant chaos outside their homes.

Yet another resident of Koramangala said that many of these office spaces now also host parties on weekends, which makes it difficult to step out of their houses.

"Many of them get drunk and step out late to pick up their vehicles and drive home. There is a constant fear to even get out during such times," a resident who did not want to be named said.

That apart, the infrastructure is yet another problem. Ideally, the power supply, water supply, and even the sewage lines in the area should be planned based on the zonal classification and the current needs. An increase in activities that violate the zonal norm also increases the burden on the civic infrastructure, residents said.

RMP-2015 RULES

Road Width	Conditional / Additional uses allowed
< 9 m • Residential (detached / Semi-detached / apartments) • Parks, playgrounds • Utilities	• Home occupations • Small clinics (non-nursing) • Creche / day care
9 m – < 12 m All above uses +	• Nursing homes (small scale) • Schools (nursery / primary) • Banks, offices (small) • Convenience shops
12 m – < 18 m All above uses +	• Restaurants (non-bar) • Lodging (small) • Educational institutions (higher) • Clinics with beds
18 m – < 24 m All above uses +	• Hotels • Commercial offices • Shopping (moderate scale) • Hospitals
≥ 24 m All above uses +	• Full commercial use • Malls / large retail • Multiplexes • IT / office complexes

From restaurants to offices to even pubs, residents have had to fight against such establishments to keep the residential areas as serene as before. However, even after approaching the city corporations, citizens are finding it difficult to get these establishments vacated.

"We have brought the issue to the notice of every city corporation commissioner for over a decade now. Way back in 2015, the corporation also issued a public notice and order requiring such establishments to be removed from residential areas. But even to this day, there has been hardly any implementation on the ground. The officials just let them be. Many times, they do not even respond to RTIs for us to gather more information," said Sneha Nandihal from iChange Indiranagar.

Official apathy

In the first place, establishments that violate zonal regulations should not be issued a trade license. While a few establishments have trade licenses, others are not concerned with them.

A senior Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) official told *DH* that such establishments are denied trade licenses.

"We do not issue trade licenses to them. However, many times, such establishments just come up even without our permission, and it gets difficult to track them," the official clarified.

Even when residents have brought the issue to the attention of the corporation officials, the officials could do little. Though the now-dissolved Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagarara Palike had issued multiple notices, it failed to clear many establishments from the residential areas.

"There is an eatery in one of our bylanes. The corporation has not given them a trade license, and there is even a court eviction notice. But even to this day, it continues to operate," Venkatesh noted.

Sources in GBA blamed it on the "lower levels" where "there might be some corruption or pressure leading to such inaction".

"Some might have joined hands with the establishments, and hence, there might not have been strict enforcement. However, we should also consider that corporate officials work under a lot of pressure. Many such establishments bring in influence from elected representatives and higher officials, making it difficult for the officials at the lower level to enforce the norms," one of the sources said.

Feedback:
pointblank@ deccanherald.co.in

Willl new master plan help?

The existing RMP-2015 was drafted in 2005-07, and since then, the city has been using the same outdated plan. A new plan was due in 2015. Though the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) released a draft RMP-2031 in 2017, it withdrew it in 2020.

Most of the commercialisation that the city's residents are fighting has come up in violation of the zoning regulations under RMP-2015.

It is once again time for a new master plan and, hence, new zoning regulations. The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), appointed as the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for the GBA area, is in the process of preparing a new master plan, RMP-2041.

The state government, in its 2026-27 budget, set an end-of-2027 deadline for the draft of the new plan, and subsequently all five city corporations earmarked funds in their budgets for the preparation of the master plan. GBA has already called for a tender to rope in a consultant for the same.

The big question is whether the new master plan will acknowledge the developments on the ground and introduce changes to the zonal regulations, or stick to the old regulations, not allowing commercialisation in these residential pockets.

If the new master plan recognises the ground reality and tweaks the zoning regulations accordingly, it could provide the commercial establishments an opportunity to regularise their businesses. It means the residents will have to accept it and live with it. The new rules are also susceptible to violation, as the problem has always been enforcement, not the law. The cycle will only continue.

If the GBA decides to continue with the existing zoning regulations, can it realistically be enforced is the question.

Any master plan should ideally serve two functions: predict the direction of growth and plan for it. The civic body must implement the plan in full to regulate growth. Clearly, the civic body's failure to implement the zoning regulations has led to the commercialisation of these residential areas. But the Plan also failed to predict the scale of growth.

GBA chief commissioner Maheshwar Rao said that the corporation will survey the situation on the ground before making a decision. "We are now in the initial stages of preparation. We will conduct a comprehensive survey to understand the development on the ground and consult with all the stakeholders before taking a decision on formulating the zonal regulations," Rao said.

Experts opined that it is crucial to consider the developments while preparing the plan. "The role of the master plan is crucial in shaping the future development of the city in a meaningful manner. It is important that the plan caters to both the changing local needs and the market dynamics," said urban planner Champaka Rajagopal, faculty, Centre for Policy Research.

In areas where all types of development and commercial developments are permitted without adequate planning, infrastructure often becomes difficult to manage, creating legacy problems. This image captures a recent fire incident at a commercial building along a narrow road in Kumbarpet, Bengaluru. DH FILE PHOTO

METRO

City police to prepare database of cases involving bike taxi captains, gig workers

Comes after recent molestation case against Rapido driver

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

Bengaluru City Police are preparing a database of recent cases involving bike taxi drivers in the city.

A similar database is also being prepared for cases involving gig workers such as delivery agents and cab drivers.

"We had even recently held a meeting with all the aggregator platforms, and everyone involved. But back then, since bike taxis were not plying on city roads, they were not a part of the meeting. Now, we will be creating a separate database to examine cases revolving around bike taxis and will soon call for a meeting with the respective aggregators," Bengaluru City Police Commissioner Seemant Kumar Singh told *DH*.

Seemant Kumar Singh

Considering a recent police case against a Rapido driver for allegedly molesting a passenger, Singh said his team will look into the safety measures and traffic practices followed by bike taxi drivers.

"In such professions, where you have a direct relationship with the consumer, trust is very important. With bike taxis being a fairly new profession, we need to establish strict rules of operation," he added.

Safety protocol

Currently, Rapido, Uber and Ola offer bike taxi services in the city.

While Ola and Uber did not respond to *DH* queries about the safety protocols in their organisations, Rapido shared details about the onboarding process and the features used to ensure rider and passenger safety.

"Every captain onboarded on the platform undergoes rigorous verification protocols, including comprehensive background checks, strict KYC processes, and mandatory training modules focused on conduct, rider sensitivity, and safety.

"Beyond onboarding, Rapido has built multiple layers in app safety mechanisms to support riders and captains throughout the journey. These include real-time ride tracking with live-location sharing, an SOS button for immediate assistance, and 24/7 access to dedicated support channels.

"In addition, the platform has systems in place to flag irregular ride patterns, such as unexpected or prolonged stops, triggering proactive checks, including outreach to the customer to ensure their safety," a Rapido spokesperson said.

Across aggregator platforms, safety protocols remain similar, said Adi Narayan, president of the Bike Taxi Welfare Association.

"You have to submit your documents, such as Aadhaar, driver's licence, PAN card, along with a selfie. The company will then verify the documents, check if you have any police cases or traffic violations and then approve your account. The one difference among platforms is that Uber and Rapido provide training modules. All bike taxi drivers have to sit through video-training modules and answer a questionnaire to get approval. It is not the same on Ola."

Signal jumping, mobile phone use blamed for spike in road crashes

AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

From signal jumping to mobile phone usage, a mix of reckless driver behaviour and flawed road design is driving a surge in road accidents.

Emergency rooms at major city hospitals report more traumatic and life-changing injuries, including those related to the brain, than commonly thought, doctors say.

Dr Shailesh Shetty S, Senior Consultant and In-charge of Emergency Medicine and Patient and Clinical Safety Officer at a private hospital, said: "In Bengaluru, around 15-20% of total accidents are usually classified as severe or life-threatening, which includes fatal cases, while the remaining 80-85% are generally minor injuries. Roughly, one in every five accidents can lead to serious health outcomes."

Classifying the accidents, he said, "Nearly 60-70% of road accident patients are two-wheeler riders, many of whom come with head injuries, fractures or soft tissue trauma, while car accident cases are fewer and often involve less severe injuries due to safety features."

Rising road risks

- Reckless driving and poor road design are major causes of rising accidents in Bengaluru.
- Serious injuries are common; about 15–20% of accidents are life-threatening, often involving brain trauma.
- Two-wheeler riders are most affected; they make up 60–70% of accident victims, frequently with head injuries and fractures.
- Car occupants fare relatively better due to safety features, leading to less severe injuries.

Doctors pointed out that a lack of safety measures contributes to the significant share of accidents.

Dr Veekshith Shetty, Consultant (Neurosurgery), said: "The most common causes remain speeding, drunk driving, failure to follow traffic rules such as jumping signals, wrong-side driving, not wearing helmets or seatbelts, and use of mobile phones while driving.

"Traumatic brain injuries are quite common and we address several head injuries on any given day. Many patients come with severe head trauma, skull fractures, or bleeding inside the brain, and some need urgent surgery to save their lives," he added.

Alcohol and mobile phone usage have added to the accidents, doctors note.

"Mobile phone usage is contributing to accidents among four-wheeler drivers, which is increasing the cases. Alcohol is the most important factor," said Dr Rajiv Jain, Consultant (Accident and Emergency).

Regarding patients reaching hospitals in time, Dr Rajiv said, "The golden hour, meaning the first hour after an accident, is crucial for survival. In reality, many patients reach us after one to three hours, sometimes even later. The delays are because of several reasons, like lack of immediate ambulance access in some areas, traffic congestion, and bystanders hesitating to help."

Pedestrian accidents up

Dr Shetty said, "We are seeing a rise in pedestrian injuries. Many of these cases are linked to uneven road infrastructure, and we treat pedestrians with fractures, head injuries, and soft tissue damage due to these conditions, while hit-and-run cases remain relatively low."

Phone thefts at IPL match prompt security overhaul at Chinnaswamy

New e-ticketing, WhatsApp alerts for remaining matches

PRAJWAL D'SOUZA
BENGALURU, DHNS

Bengaluru police have rolled out a new e-ticketing system and tightened security measures at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium ahead of the IPL matches, following widespread phone thefts during the season opener on March 28.

"We are taking a systematic approach to deployment, learning and improving with every match. A coordination committee has held two meetings after the previous match — one for suggestions and another for review," said Joint Commissioner of Police (West) C Vamsi Krishna.

Krishna, a member of the expert committee overseeing implementation of recommendations at the stadium, said organisers were asked to create proper awareness about the e-ticketing system.

"Once a ticket is booked online, fans can add their friends or those accompanying them, and the system will send individual, unique QR codes to their mobile phone numbers. This will allow everyone to enter individually and wait at the designated holding areas, instead of crowding on the footpaths. This feature will be enabled until the QR code is generated, around five to six hours before the match kicks off," Krishna said.

To address confusion surrounding revised entry gate numbers, periodic WhatsApp alerts will be sent to ticket holders.

"Organisers have been told to map all gates on Google Maps and send ticket holders WhatsApp links that they can click to navigate directly to the gate. Two volunteers will also be placed inside the metro stations to guide attendees. Permission was also taken to put up signage inside the metro stations.

"Metro ridership was very good on the opening match day," the officer added.

Traffic police have also been asked to coordinate with ride apps to enforce designated pickup and drop-off points.

"Ride bookings can only be made at specific points. Improvements are also being made to shuttle bus systems to and from parking locations, as well as baggage counters," Krishna said.

Following phone thefts around the stadium during the opener between RCB and SRH on March 28, police busted an organised interstate gang and arrested some suspects, including minors. Security changes have since been made at the stadium.

"The number of plainclothes personnel will be increased, and surveillance camera coverage expanded in certain areas to eliminate blind spots. Special squads will be deployed to ensure only those with valid tickets remain on the premises," Krishna said.

Enhanced security measures announced

- Increase in plainclothes personnel.
- Expanded surveillance to eliminate blind spots.
- Deployment of special squads.
- Strict access; only valid ticket holders allowed.

A file photo of senior police officials inspecting security and crowd management arrangements at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium ahead of the IPL opener on March 28.

Govt employee cheated of Rs 1.23L in Mudra loan scam

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 54-year-old government employee was allegedly cheated of Rs 1.23 lakh by fraudsters who promised to arrange a loan under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana.

Mahadevapura police have registered a case and launched an investigation.

The victim, Prakash EH, a resident of Udayanagar, said he was first contacted on WhatsApp by a man identified as Vijay, who offered to facilitate a Rs 20-lakh loan under the scheme. He was later approached by another person, Vinay, who reinforced the claims and gained his trust.

"Believing their assurances, I transferred money as instructed. Later, I realised I had been cheated," Prakash told *DH*.

He then contacted the cybercrime helpline and filed a complaint with Mahadevapura police.

A senior police officer said the phone numbers of the accused persons are currently switched off. "Efforts are underway to trace them," the officer said.

Preliminary investigations revealed that the victim had been searching online for loan options when fraudsters identified and targeted him, eventually duping him of the money, the officer added.

Rajasthan man found hanging from tree in Cubbon Park

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 35-year-old man from Rajasthan was found hanging from a tree inside Cubbon Park on Friday, police said.

The deceased, identified as Suresh, worked at a mobile phone shop on SP Road.

His body was discovered by security guards who arrived for morning duty, following which they alerted Cubbon Park police, an officer said.

Police went to the spot, conducted a preliminary inspection, and shifted the body for postmortem.

A case of unnatural death has been registered. No suicide note was found, and the reason behind the death is yet to be ascertained.

His family members have been informed and are expected to arrive from Rajasthan. Suresh is survived by his wife and two children.

A probe will be carried out based on their statements.

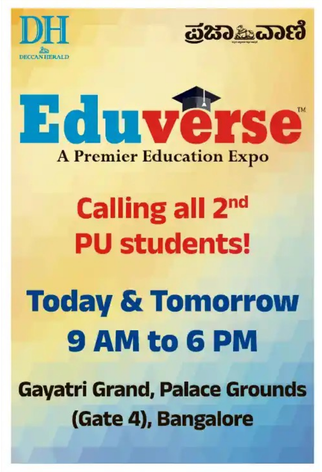
Report child sex abuse to police: Govt to private hospitals

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Health and Family Welfare Department has issued guidelines to private hospitals to immediately report child sex abuse cases under the Pocso Act to the nearest police station and have them registered.

Hospitals must also report the case to children's helpline 1908, which will take further action. Any pregnant girl under 18 must be reported immediately.

A doctor or any other person responsible for failing to report such cases will face a year in prison and may also be fined, the order states.

Hospitals must lawfully collect patient and treatment documents and respect their privacy. All staff must be trained to handle Pocso cases and be aware of the law. Hospitals must also cooperate with the investigating officer, the order adds.



◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL

Talk on Film Writing: By Jayanth Kaikini; Organised by Tent Cinema, Lyrics; 17th Main Road, Banashankari 2nd Stage; 10 am.

'No War, We Want Peace': Public Meet; Santosh Hegde, V Gopalagowda, Gururaj Karajagi, Roopashree Kumar to attend; Organised by Swami Vivekananda Abhyudaya Pratishtana; Judicial Employees Housing Cooperative Building, Judicial Layout; 3.30 pm.

Book Launch: 'Baduku Jataka Bandi, Nanadara Saheba..." by IM Vittalamurthy; Chiranjivi Singh, TN Seetharam, KN Shanthakumar to attend; Organised by Bahuroopi, Aniketana; IAS Officers' Association, Infantry Road; 5 pm.

RELIGIOUS

88th Sri Ramanavami Music Festival: Concert by Mihika Suraj, Sandeep Narayan; Mattur Srinidhi to attend; Organised by Sri Rama Seva Mandali Ramanavami Celebration Trust; Kote High School Grounds, Chamarajpet; 5 pm onwards.

Yakshagana: 'Gadayuddha' (Kengeri Yellamma Devi Karaga Festival); Gajanana Hegde, Narayana Hebbar, Devadas Shetty Marali, Prashanth Hegde, and team; Yellamma Devi Hasikaraga Mantapa Grounds, Kengeri; 6.30 pm.

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST

Thunderstorm with rain

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	33.6°C
Minimum	22.0°C
Rainfall (as of 8:30 am)	--
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm)	53%
Sunset (April 4)	6:31 pm
Sunrise (April 5)	6:15 am
Moonrise	7:36 pm
Moonset	6:46 pm

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

GBA's 15% deviation plan: A lifeline for some, wrong signal for others

SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

The Greater Bengaluru Authority's (GBA) proposal to increase the permissible deviation in building sanctioned plans from 5% to 15% has drawn criticism from experts, while bringing relief to thousands of residents.

Well-placed sources said nearly 1.2 lakh property owners who were stuck without power and water connections due to a lack of Occupancy Certificates (OCs) can now get relief as the norms have been relaxed.

"There are more than 3.5 lakh such properties that have violated building bylaws and have been denied OCs. Of them, 40% to 45% can now get OCs as their violations are below 15%, but above 5%," a source said.

Many residents said the move brought a sense of relief.

"It has been almost a year since we finished construction of our house and have been waiting to move in. However, the Supreme Court ruling and the decision to not provide water and power connections had stalled our plans. Now, with the relaxation of norms, we can get an OC and both power and water connections," said Raghav R, a resident of JP Nagar.

Similar was the thinking of many others who were awaiting some form of relief from the government.

However, the decision has drawn criticism from experts and activists who said it was disincentivising honest, law-abiding citizens.

"If I have followed all the bylaws and my neighbour does not, he is still allowed to go ahead. If such is the case, why would people follow the norms? With such violations, many houses lose ventilation and access to clean air. Such decisions affect the quality of life," said Kathyayini Chamaraj, activist and executive trustee of CIVIC-Bangalore.

URBAN PLANNER

"This is like acknowledging the violations and formalising them. This only encourages people to commit more violations. The decision seems to have been taken solely to increase the revenue of the corporations.

An urban planner said the civic body should not acknowledge such violations as it would only set a wrong precedent.

Many activists and urban planners are of the opinion that the new regulations were introduced only to increase the revenue of city corporations and were unacceptable.

Summer special train to Kanpur

BENGALURU, DHNS: The railways will operate a special train between SMVT Bengaluru and Kanpur Central via Prayagraj Junction during the summer.

Train number 04131 will depart from Kanpur Central every Sunday at 4.30 pm from April 5 to July 12 and arrive at SMVT Bengaluru at 6.30 pm on Tuesdays.

In the return direction, train number 04132 will depart from SMVT Bengaluru every Wednesday at 7.10 am from April 8 to July 15 and reach Kanpur Central at 3.45 am on Fridays, a release said.

Double-decker flyover to fully open in a week, may cut HSR Layout–Jayadeva traffic by 80%

BENGALURU, DHNS: Commuters travelling through the city's south-eastern corridor via Silk Board Junction may soon find relief.

Bengaluru's first double-decker flyover — a long-awaited project — is set to become fully operational within a week, according to a senior traffic police officer familiar with the developments.

The officer said the ramps are expected to reduce traffic congestion between HSR Layout and Jayadeva Hospital by as much as 80%.

Following a detailed inspection on April 2, authorities confirmed that the ramps connecting HSR Layout to BTM Layout and Ragigudda are ready for public use. These ramps run beneath the Metro's Yellow Line. The project had faced delays due to the installation of a 42-metre steel girder, but the work has now been completed.

The Central Silk Board double-decker flyover in its final stages. DH FILE PHOTO

While the infrastructure is technically ready, the final inauguration is still pending.

Authorities are currently coordinating with the office of Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar to finalise a date for the opening ceremony.

Once open, the ramps are expected to be a game-changer, with traffic police estimating a significant reduction in congestion along the stretch between HSR Layout Main Road and Jayadeva Hospital.

For thousands of daily commuters who have endured years of delays, the development comes as welcome news.

To ensure safety, authorities have imposed a strict speed limit of 40 kmph on the ramps, along with a weight restriction allowing only vehicles up to 50 tonnes.

The ramps connecting Ragigudda to Hosur Road, BTM Layout, and HSR Layout were partially opened in July 2024.

GBA officials caught taking Rs 3-lakh bribe

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Lokayukta police on Thursday said they caught two GBA officials allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 3 lakh for processing khata-related work.

The accused have been identified as Venkatesh, a revenue inspector, and Srinivas, a tax inspector, both posted in the Thanisandra ward.

Nyamathulla Khan, a resident of Hegde Nagar, had approached Lokayukta officials alleging that his khata application was pending and that the officials had demanded a bribe to clear the file.

During a trap operation, Srinivas was caught red-handed while accepting the bribe from Khan.

A century of history, gone in 48 hours: Dewan's heritage home in city razed for flats

BENGALURU, DHNS

The 119-year-old heritage residence of Sir MN Krishna Rao, former Dewan of the princely state of Mysore, is set to be demolished to make way for mixed residential and commercial redevelopment.

By Thursday evening, the bungalow, located directly opposite the Jayanagar park that bears the Dewan's name, had been stripped of its ornate teak doors and signature windows. Locals say the structure will be completely razed within 48 hours.

The news has triggered an outpouring from heritage lovers, many of whom have taken to social media to share memories of the building and its iconic red-oxide corridors.

Suresh Moona, a columnist on Bengaluru history and a close friend of the Dewan's grandson M Narendra, told *DH* that the century-old structure was one of the few well-maintained heritage buildings remaining in the city.

It is an early 20th-century Basavanagudi architectural gem featuring spacious layouts, red-oxide floors, towering Madras roof terraces, grand gates, servant quarters, and verdant fruit trees – embodying the traditional charm of Mysore.

Narendra, who resided in the house, frequently welcomed heritage enthusiasts and academics interested in the architectural study of old Bangalore.

"He used to show me old pictures, brass coverings, and the original wiring," Moona said.

"He had a massive collection upstairs featuring vintage furniture, a radio, and a gramophone from the bygone era that belonged to the Dewan himself."

Rao had donated funds to develop the park in front of his bungalow, which is why it was named in his honour.

The building featured salient characteristics of early 20th-century Basavanagudi architecture, including spacious layouts, red-oxide floors, and tall Madras roof terraces.

It represented the traditional culture of the Mysore state, with a large site, wide gates, servant quarters, and fruit trees within the compound.

Narendra had authored a coffee table book on the building, which featured an extensive album of photographs.

A member of the Basavanagudi Heritage Forum noted that many of the family's heirs have settled abroad and find it difficult to maintain ancestral heritage structures.

They are consequently being approached by apartment builders who offer redevelopment deals.

"This is happening to many heritage buildings in the vicinity. The government should take the initiative and preserve these heritage structures as museums for future generations," he added.

40 injured in bee attack during prayers

SHIVAMOGGA, DHNS: A swarm of honeybees attacked over 40 people during Good Friday prayers on the premises of Sacred Heart church on BH road in the city.

More than 800 devotees were present at the prayer when the bees attacked them. Many of them ran inside the church to protect themselves, but they were not spared. Over 17 injured were taken to District McGann Hospital and another 23 were shifted to a private hospital. Of these, three people sustained severe injuries and are being treated as inpatients.

Farmer's daughter to receive 4 gold medals at BCU convocation today

Questions over honorary doctorate to politicians

Sneha T

Abhishek Sriram

BENGALURU, DHNS

Neither her humble origins nor the long commute to her alma mater deterred Sneha T, the daughter of a Devanahalli farmer, who will walk home with four gold medals at the Dr Manmohan Singh Bengaluru City University convocation ceremony on Saturday.

Although she spent a considerable time on the road travelling between Doddasanne village in Devanahalli and her college, Sneha, a MSc (Chemistry) student, nevertheless, aced her exams. An elated Sneha expressed her gratitude to her parents and teachers, attributing her success to their unstinting support. Currently working as an assistant professor at a Chikkaballapura college, Sneha aims to pursue a PhD in Chemistry.

Abhishek Sriram, a BCom student from Seshadripuram Institute of Commerce and Management, Bengaluru, meanwhile, will receive three gold medals at the convocation ceremony. Abhishek has now set his sights on cracking the civil services examination. Divyasree S, a BBA student from Krupanidhi College of Commerce and Management, too has bagged three gold medals.

In all, 37,393 students – 21,912 girls and 15,458 boys – will be awarded their respective degrees on Saturday, besides the 23 PhD scholars who will receive their doctorate. Of these, 71 will receive rank certificates, while 73 gold medals and cash awards will be distributed.

Unsurprisingly, girls will take home most of the laurels at the convocation ceremony. While 37 of the 42 postgraduate rankholders are girls, only nine of the 29 undergraduate rankholders are boys.

Honorary doctorate for Cong MLC

Congress MLC K Govindaraj will be conferred an honorary doctorate at the convocation ceremony in acknowledgement of his contribution to sports administration. Incidentally, Karnataka State Cricket Association president and former India cricketer Venkatesh Prasad will also be bestowed the honour, along with former Deputy Chief Minister Ashwath Narayana's father T K Narayanappa, JD(S) lawmaker Bava Mohammed Farooq, educationist Mohan Alva and music director Arjun Janya.

However, the decision to award honorary doctorates to politicians has not gone well with a few members of the varsity's syndicate and academic council. In an expression of dissent, a syndicate member has decided not to participate in the convocation ceremony.

Varsity Vice-Chancellor Ramesh B, however, defended the choices made by the university. "No one has objected to the varsity conferring honorary doctorates on those chosen. But some have expressed the need for the process to be more transparent. No name was chosen under political pressure of any sort," said the VC.

Jayalakshmi Vilas Mansion: UoM yet to decide on entrusting upkeep to private entity

SHILPA P
MYSURU, DHNS

Jayalakshmi Vilas Mansion in Mysuru. DH FILE PHOTO

The University of Mysore (UoM) is contemplating handing over the 121-year-old heritage structure, Jayalakshmi Vilas Mansion (JVM) on Manasagangotri campus, to Deccan Heritage Foundation (DHF) for a period of 40 years, said Vice Chancellor N K Lokanath.

The V-C said that they are contemplating entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the DHF for maintenance of the heritage structure.

The proposal was discussed during the syndicate meeting recently. However, no decision has been taken yet to hand over the structure, said UoM Registrar M K Savitha.

UoM officials have urged V-C Lokanath to obtain approvals from the Mysuru heritage expert committee led by Deputy Commissioner G Lakshmikanth Reddy and the state government before taking any decision.

"The UoM entered into an MoU with DHF in 2023 for restoration. The DHF undertook restoration work at a cost of nearly Rs 33 crore through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funding and international cultural preservation initiatives," Lokanath said.

"DHF has only proposed to maintain it. They are developing a state-of-the-art international museum and a conservation lab. UoM lacks funds and the government is not providing any funds for the maintenance of this heritage building. Hence, we are contemplating giving it to DHF only for maintenance. The proposal was discussed in the syndicate meeting, but a decision is pending," Lokanath told *DH*.

Mysuru Heritage experts committee member, retired professor N S Rangaraju, said, "JVM is one of the 25 heritage buildings of UoM. The V-C is the custodian of JVM but not the owner. It can only be given for maintenance, not for lease or rent. When Sudha Murty gave Rs 1.7 crore for its restoration in 2000, she had said that the building should not be used for any other purpose."

According to sources from the department of Heritage Archaeology and Museums, as per the zonal regulations of the Town and Country Planning Act, the experts committee should make decisions regarding modifications in the heritage building.

The custodian can make decisions on its maintenance.

"JVM is among the 14 palaces of Mysuru. Kempananjammanni Vani Vilasa Sannidana, wife of 10th Chamarajendra Wadiyar and mother of Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar, built it for her first daughter, Jayalakshmammanni. Its foundation stone was laid in 1902 and the works were completed in 1905. In 1958, when Kuvempu was Vice Chancellor of the UoM, he purchased 350 acres of land, along with JVM, from Jayachamaraja Wadiyar. Kuvempu named the campus as Manasagangotri," Rangaraju added.

The UoM had entered into a MoU with the Department of Kannada and Culture in February 2023 to provide a portion of JVM to house the Centre of Excellence for Studies in Classical Kannada (CESCK).

The department plans to house CESCK after the restoration works.

Yadgir citizens to get free vision screening and reading glasses

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Department of Health and Family Welfare and nonprofit organisation RestoringVision on Friday announced a new partnership to provide free vision screening and reading glasses to citizens aged 40 years and above through Karnataka's Ayushman Arogya Mandir Sub Centres (AAM-SC).

The first phase of the initiative will be launched in the Yadgiri district, where one lakh near glasses will be provided free of charge.

These will be distributed across 216 government health facilities across Yadgir's six taluks, including hospitals, Community Health Centres, Primary Health Centres, and AAM sub-centres. The programme targets an estimated 328,795 residents aged 40 and above across the district.

Presbyopia, the gradual, age-related loss of the ability to focus on nearby objects, is one of the leading causes of vision impairment worldwide. In Yadgir district alone, approximately 28% of the population is estimated to be affected, according to the department's data.

Implementation

The programme will be implemented in partnership with iDrishti, a Bengaluru-based social impact eye hospital network. iDrishti will manage training of Community Health Officers and Auxiliary Nurse Midwives, supply distribution and restocking, and technology integration with the government of Karnataka's Spectacle app, said a press release.

UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

Advt. No. R&P/315/2026 Dated: 12.03.2026

Online applications are invited in the prescribed Application Form from eligible candidates for appointment to the post of Associate Professor in the Academic Pay Level-13 A of the 7th Central Pay Commission Pay Matrix, in the Centre for **Hindu Studies,** University of Delhi. The last date for receipt of applications is two weeks from the date of publication of the advertisement in the Employment News. For more details, please visit the University website **www.du.ac.in** and click "Jobs and Opportunities" under the Head "Work with DU"

Any addendum/corrigendum shall be posted only on the University website.

CBC 21231/12/0007/2526 REGISTRAR

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH, TIRUPATI
(An Autonomous Institution of National Importance under Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)
Yerpedu Mandal - 517619, Tirupati.

Admission to Ph.D. & MS(R) Programs, AUGUST- 2026

IISER Tirupati (www.iisertirupati.ac.in) invites online applications for admission to the Ph.D. and MS(R) programs in various disciplines for the August- 2026 session. For details of educational qualifications, eligibility criteria, selection procedure, online application, and last date of submission, please visit

Ph.D. - https://www.iisertirupati.ac.in/admission-phd/
MS(R) - https://www.iisertirupati.ac.in/two-year-ms-r-admission/
MIPA -Joint Ph.D Program - https://www.iisertirupati.ac.in/phd-mipa/

Advt. No.23/2026/IISER-T/Admissions/17-03-2026

Sd/-
Director

CBC 21377/12/0001/2627

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client, M/s. Central Government, Telecom and Information Technology Employees' Housing Co-operative Society Ltd., Vasanthnagar, Bengaluru - 560052, have purchased the land properties mentioned below through registration for the formation of "Brahmagiri Town Layout" by paying the members' money from the Society to Mr. Manjunatha. M, M/s. M Square Developers. The details of the purchased lands situated in Nagawala Village, Mysuru Taluk, Mysuru District are Survey Nos.: 252/2, 252/3, Old S.No. 303/1-P2 New S.No. 303/3, 321, 264, 258, 249, 249, 249, 265/1, 271/2, 252/4, 252/5, 252/6, 300/3, 250/2, 258, 260/7, 285/7, 260/6, 285/1, 268/2, 268/6, 246/2, 246/1, 257, 241/4, 240/2, 240/3, 251/2, 239/1, 238/1, 243/1, 243/2, 250/3, 162 (1 Acre 10 Guntas), 162 (2 Acres 10 Guntas), 162 (2 Acres). Situated in Ilavala Village, Survey Nos.: 268/1, 267/4 (Old S.No. 267/3), 268/8 (S.No. 268/4), 269/6, 219/1, 218. Above housing society is the absolute owner of the above-mentioned properties and are in possession of the scheduled properties. Therefore, any person/ persons/ organizations should not engage in monetary transactions regarding the properties mentioned above; if any monetary transaction is made or if an attempt is made to engage in monetary transactions in future, my clients, M/s. Central Government, Telecom and Information Technology Employees' Housing Co-operative Society Ltd., Vasanthnagar, Bengaluru - 560052, will not be responsible for providing any claim. I hereby inform that my client will not be liable for any kind of rights or claims related to the above-mentioned scheduled properties.

Address:Manjunath N., Advocate,C.G.T.I.T., Vasanthnagar, Bengaluru. Mob No: 8884365159. **Date : 03-04-2026 Place : Bengaluru**

GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL CAPITAL TERRITORY OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT MAGISTRATE, SOUTH-EAST, DELHI
OLD GARGI COLLEGE BUILDING, LAJPAT NAGAR-IV, NEW DELHI-110024
OFFICE OF THE RETURNING OFFICER
TRIBAL COOPERATIVE MARKETING DEVELOPMENT FEDERATION OF INDIA LIMITED (TRIFED)

F.No. "TRIFED" Cooperative Election/169/2026-27/203

ELECTION NOTICE

In exercise of the powers conferred upon me as the Returning Officer appointed by the Cooperative Election Authority, Ministry of Cooperation, Government of India under Rule 19 F (a) and Rule 19 H (3) of the MSCS Rules 2002, as amended with MSCS Rules in 2023 vide Order No. CEA-12011/298/2025 dated 3rd March, 2026, notice is hereby given under Rule 19 H (4) and Rule 19 I (3) of the MSCS Rules 2002, as amended with MSCS Rules in 2023 that the election for the Board Members (10 Nos.) and Office Bearers (2 Nos.) (Chairman-1 & Vice-Chairman-1) of the "Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED)" will be held in accordance with the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002 as amended in 2023, and rules framed thereunder and the provisions contained in the applicable Bye-laws of TRIFED. The detailed election programme can be downloaded from the official website of TRIFED i.e. trifed.tribal.gov.in

Sd/- DR. SRAVAN BAGARIA, IAS
District Magistrate/Collector
South-East District, Delhi
Returning Officer
TRIBAL CO-OPERATIVE MARKETING DEVELOPMENT FEDERATION OF INDIA LTD. (TRIFED)
Election No. 169/2026-27

CBC 43104/12/0001/2627

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice No. T-MD-52-COL-VM dt: 01.04.2026
Bid Number: GEM / 2026 / 8 / 7369988 dt: 01.04.2026

Chief Medical Superintendent, Railway Hospital, Golden Rock, Tiruchchirappalli - 620 004, invites e-tender for the following work.

SL.NO.	Name of the work	
1	Name of work with its Location	Activity based contract for outsourcing of housekeeping activities at VM Colony including door-to-door collection of biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste, transportation, segregation, processing of biodegradable waste to compost and handing over of non-biodegradable waste to authorized recyclers for a period of two years (excluding Sundays).
2	Approximate Cost of the work (₹)	₹1,03,27,968/- inclusive of GST @ 18%
3	Earnest Money to be deposited (₹)	As detailed in the bid document
4	Completion period of the Work	Two Years from the date of commencement of work
5	Date & Time of opening of Bid (Technical Bid)	As detailed in the bid document
6	Date & Time of opening of Financial Bid	Will be informed later on, after the evaluation of Technical Bids (Only to the bidders who will be successful in the Technical Bid)
7	Validity of Bid	65 days from the last date of submission of bid.
8	Website Particulars	www.gem.gov.in

Tender Document with detailed terms and conditions are available at the above website.

Chief Medical Supdt,
Railway Hospital, Golden Rock

MINERAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
DIRECTORATE OF GEOLOGY AND MINING, MADHYA PRADESH
29- A Khanij Bhawan, Arera Hills Bhopal
Phone and fax 0755-2551795, Email: geology.dgm@mp.gov.in

No- /Auction - 19 / Geology / F. No.- 19 / 2025-26 March 31, 2026

Notice Inviting Tender

"Invitation of bids for grant of Mining Lease for Limestone, Basemetal (Zinc), Iron ore and Manganese, and Manganese minerals and for grant of Composite Licence for Basemetal (Zinc), Limestone, Aluminous Laterite, Basemetal (Lead, Zinc, Copper and Silver), Manganese Ore, and Iron ore and Manganese"

In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 10B and Section 11 of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 and in accordance with the Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2015 notified thereunder, as amended from time to time, the Government of Madhya Pradesh has identified:

a) 11 mineral blocks (8 blocks of Limestone, 1 block of Basemetal (Zinc), 1 block of Iron ore and Manganese, and 1 block of Manganese) for Electronic Auction and hereby invites tenders for the purposes of grant of Mining Lease.

b) 6 mineral blocks (1 block of Basemetal (Zinc), 1 block of Limestone, 1 block of Aluminous Laterite, 1 block of Basemetal (Lead, Zinc, Copper and Silver), 1 block of Manganese Ore, and 1 block of Iron ore and Manganese) for Electronic Auction and hereby invites tenders for the purposes of grant of Composite Licence.

Accordingly, financial bids are invited in digital format only and technical bids are invited both in digital and physical format from eligible bidders.

Eligibility conditions, date and time, terms, and conditions etc. for participating in the electronic auction are provided in the Tender Document. Detailed Tender Documents along with timelines, notifications, updates and other details for the e-auction process for the mineral blocks are available in electronic form only and can be downloaded from the e-auction portal of MSTC Limited [https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/mlcln/index.jsp].

Interested and eligible bidders can register themselves on the above e-auction portal. On successful registration, eligible bidders will obtain login ID and password necessary for participation in the e-auction process. Interested and eligible bidders can participate in the bidding only after online purchase of the Tender Document on payment of the Tender fee from the above e-auction portal. The Tender Fee shall be waived, for those mineral blocks only which have been put up for auction under "second attempt" as per Mineral Auction Rule vide this Notice Inviting Tender, for such bidders only who have previously purchased the Tender Document in prior auction attempts of the said mineral block. Any revision, clarifications, addendum, corrigendum, time extensions, etc. to the tender document will be hosted on the above e-auction portal only and no separate notifications shall be issued in the press.

Model Tender Document and Mineral Block Summaries are available free of cost on the e-auction portal of MSTC Limited website [https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/mlcln/index.jsp]

List of Mineral Blocks for Auction

SNO	Name of the Block	District	Mineral	ML/CL	Price of Tender Document without GST* (in Rs.)
First Attempt Blocks					
1.	Kehalpur (East) Basemetal (Zn) Block	Betul	Basemetal (Zn)	CL	2,00,000
2.	Bhaiyatikur Manganese Deposit Block	Balaghat	Manganese	ML	25,000
3.	Hinotaghat Limestone Block	Damoh	Limestone	ML	5,00,000
4.	Kuiyan Barwah Limestone Block	Rewa	Limestone	ML	2,00,000
5.	Birwa Bhitwan Limestone Block	Rewa	Limestone	ML	2,00,000
6.	Bhatia Nadan Sarda Prasad Limestone Block	Maihar	Limestone	CL	5,00,000
7.	Jhiti Iron Ore, Manganese, Laterite Block #	Jabalpur	Iron Ore, Manganese, Laterite	CL	5,00,000
8.	Dhamani Nana Manganese Block#	Jhabua	Manganese	CL	25,000
Second Attempt Blocks					
9.	Bharewa Biharkala, Tikarkala Limestone Block#	Maihar & Katni	Limestone	ML	5,00,000
10.	Biskhan Extended Basemetal (Zn) Block	Betul	Basemetal (Zn)	ML	5,00,000
11.	Argat (Part-B) Limestone Block	Maihar	Limestone	ML	25,000
12.	Argat (Part-C) Limestone Block	Maihar	Limestone	ML	2,00,000
13.	Argat (Part-D) Limestone Block	Maihar	Limestone	ML	2,00,000
14.	Khadgada Limestone Block	Maihar	Limestone	ML	5,00,000
15.	Khudawal Iron-Ore and Manganese Ore Block#	Jabalpur	Iron-Ore and Manganese	ML	2,00,000
16.	Bagda-Sawasra Basemetal (Lead, Zinc, Copper and Silver) Block	Dewas	Basemetal (Lead, Zinc, Copper and Silver)	CL	5,00,000
17.	Bhalwar Aluminous Laterite Block	Anuppur	Aluminous Laterite	CL	2,00,000

Note: * GST shall be payable by reverse charge mechanism
Mineral Blocks being put up for auction in accordance with section 10A2D of the Act

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Tender Document for the blocks being auctioned in accordance with Section 10A(2)(d) of the Act, the State Government makes no representation whatsoever, express, implicit or otherwise, regarding the accuracy and/ or completeness of the information provided in the said geological report and the Bidder confirms that it shall have no claim whatsoever against the State Government in this regard. The Bidder acknowledges and hereby accepts the risk of inadequacy, mistake or error in or relating to said geological report and hereby acknowledges and agrees that the State Government shall not be liable for the same in any manner whatsoever to the Bidder and their associates or any person claiming through or under any of them. The Bidders agree and acknowledge that any mistake or error in or relating to the said geological report shall not vitiate the tender process, Mining Lease and/ or MDPA, or render the same voidable.

The block specific Tender documents are available for purchase on the e-auction portal of MSTC Limited (https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/mlcln/index.jsp) from **Monday, April 06, 2026.** Last date for purchase of Tender Document, on the e-auction platform is **Monday, May 04, 2026,** The payment is to be remitted and received before 17:00 hours(IST) and the last date for submission of the bid is Monday, **May 11, 2026,** on or before 17:00 hours (IST).

Bidders may note that for composite licences, the Mineral (Auction) Amendment Rules, 2022 have dispensed with the requirement of indicating the division of the land into forest land, land owned by the State Government, and land not owned by the State Government and the requirement of demarcating the area using total station and differential global positioning system and has provided the flexibility of demarcating the concession area using global positioning system. However, the requisite demarcation in respect of certain blocks is nevertheless being provided [as and where available] as part of the information memorandum. Thus, the terms and conditions for auction of the said block remain unchanged.

Digitally signed by
Vinod Kumar Bagdey
Date: 31-03-2026

Additional Director
Directorate of Geology and Mining
Madhya Pradesh

G-11084/26

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

Publication of Tender notice No. CAO/CN/BNC/179/2026 dated 30.03.2026

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tender for the following work.

Item of Work	Approx.Value
Construction of Road Over Bridge in lieu of LC no. 97 @ Km:121/600-700 as 1x36 m Composite Girder (Railway portion) + 3x18.71m PSC Girder (Kirangoor end) + 6x18.71m PSC Girder (Rampur end) + 3x28m PSC Girder (Rampur end) + RCC retaining wall (approach portion) and proposed Limited height subway at km:121/540 as 1x5x2.5m RCC box Between Panadavapura and Srirangapattana stations (Composite work). **(Tender Ref. No. ROB-LC-97-PANP-S-R)**	Rs. 37,59,30,128/-

Last date for Submission of bids :
Upto 15.00 hrs on 21.04.2026

For details log on : **www.ireps.gov.in**

Deputy Chief Engineer/Construction/Works, Bengaluru Cantonment
PUB/8/AAD360/PRB/SWR/2026-27

Download the **RailOne** app. RailOne is the all-in-one railway app by Indian Railways. Passengers can book reserved tickets, unreserved tickets, platform tickets, and season passes, check PNR status, order food, and access many more services at their fingertips. Use digital payment to book unreserved tickets through **RailOne** app, and enjoy up to a **3%** discount.

South Western Railway - SWR SWRRLY @SWRAILWAYHQ @sw_railways

F. No. 13/06/2022-EC
Ministry of Power
Shram Shakti Bhawan, Rafi Marg
New Delhi-110001

VACANCY CIRCULAR

Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) is a statutory body under the Ministry of Power, Government of India, established under the provisions of Energy Conservation Act, 2001 to promote energy efficiency in the country.

It is proposed to fill up one (01) anticipated vacancy of Secretary in Bureau of Energy Efficiency in Level-13 of pay matrix on Deputation basis. The details like general conditions of service. Eligibility Criteria, Age limit, proforma of application form etc. are available on the website of Ministry of Power and Bureau of Energy Efficiency at the links h**ttps://powermin.gov.in/ & https:/ /beeindia.gov.in/en.** The application forms in duplicate **(only in the prescribed proforma)** along with copy of all the necessary documents in support of their claim for age, educational qualification(s) and experience(s) may be submitted to the Under Secretary (EC, ET & EV), Ministry of Power, Room No. 6424, Zone-IV, Sixth Floor, GPOA-3, Africa Avenue, Netaji Nagar, New Delhi-110023 through Speed post/ Registered Post only within 45 days of publication of this advertisement in the Employment News.

Under Secretary (EC, ET & EV)
Ministry of Power

CBC 34101/11/0001/2627

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY

CORRIGENDUM No. 01/2026

Kindly refer this office advertised tender no. 50265131_RC opening date on 30/04/2026 published in advertised tender notice no EPS/130/2025. The amendment made is as under:**Tender No. & short Description :** 50265131_RC Description: Supply of 5 watt VHF Digital Walkie talkie Set without Keypad and without Display, **Tender Opening Date : From :** 30/04/2026, **To:** 24/04/2026 Latest terms & condition and full information is available on websitehttps://www.ireps.gov.in.

(Sd)
for Principal Chief Material Manager
West Central Railway, Jabalpur

स्वच्छ भारत अभियान एक कदम स्वच्छता की ओर

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving
Saint Claire's Prayer
May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be praised, adored, glorified & loved today and everyday throughout the world, now and forever. Amen, Ask St.Claire for three favours too impossible and say nine Hail Mary's and the above prayer for nine days, with a lighted candle. Pray whether you believe or not publish on the ninth day. You request will be granted no matter how impossible it is.
- J. Vijaya

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Chief Guests

Bangalore: 04 - 05 April 2026
Gayatri Grand, Palace Grounds (Gate 4)

Timings: 9 AM to 6 PM

HIGHLIGHTS

TODAY **04 April 2026**	Chief Guests **PRASANNA H** Executive director - Karnataka Examination Authority 11:00 AM	Chief Guests **DR BRO GAGAN SRINIVAS** Youtuber | GoPravasa Founder 11:00 AM	Session - AI in Higher Education by **DR. J B SIMHA** Professor & Mentor, REVA University 11:30 AM	Session - CET/ NEET & Comed-K by **A S RAVI** Retired PRO & Principal 12:00 PM
TOMORROW **05 April 2026**	Chief Guest **DHRUVA SARJA** Sandalwood Actor 11:00 AM	Session - Why HR career is required by **NAGANAGOUDA S J** Hon. Secretary- NHRD, Karnataka HR Leader & Influencer 11:30 AM	Session - Design Thinking & Technology driven innovation by **COMMODORE (DR) PRAMOD R KULKARNI** Pro Vice Chancellor - School of Design Engineering at Reva University 12:00 PM	

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Make sure officers aren't moved without postings: CS

BENGALURU, DHNS: Chief Secretary (CS) Shalini Rajneesh has asked all heads of departments to ensure that no officer is transferred without being provided a place of posting. Rajneesh issued the circular after the High Court, on January 30, passed strictures against the government on the practice of transferring officers without a posting.

Referring to a May 2025 order, Rajneesh said the government had made it clear that no officer should be made to wait for a posting.

"Despite a clear directive, some departments are not providing postings to officers and employees. In such cases, the officer or employee is paid salaries and allowances even when they don't have any work. Not only does this delay the work of citizens, it causes financial losses to the government," Rajneesh stated.

Excise Deputy Commissioner K Arun Kumar went to court after he was transferred without a new posting. The court ordered that no officer should be transferred without a posting. "Directing a transferred officer/official to report before competent authority would not amount to providing posting," the court stated, according Rajneesh's circular.

"If the state transfers an officer/official without providing any posting to him, then such officer/official who is not provided posting shall not be relieved of his duties in the previous post until he is provided with posting," the court stated.

The court further stated that salary and allowances paid to such government servants during their compulsory waiting period should be recovered from officers who gave effect to the transfers - secretaries or heads of departments. Hence, Rajneesh has asked all heads of departments to follow the direction or cough up the salary and allowance payable to officers who are not given a posting upon transfer.

State-run varsities over-reliant on guest lecturers: Govt data

Many lack a single permanent faculty member

BENGALURU, DHNS

Inability on the government's part to fill sanctioned teaching posts at state-run universities has left these institutions over-reliant on guest lecturers. In fact, at some universities, there are four guest lecturers for every permanent faculty member, according to government data.

Koppal University, for instance, has a mere 12 sanctioned faculty posts, but employs 56 guest lecturers, which is a staggering 466% above its sanctioned faculty strength. It's not just new universities; even older institutions such as the University of Mysore (UoM) and Karnatak University in Dharwad are predominantly dependent on guest lecturers.

At UoM, guest lecturers account for 70% of the 571 sanctioned posts, while the number of guest lecturers employed at Kuvempu University is 157% higher than the number of sanctioned posts.

RELIANCE ON GUEST FACULTY

University	Sanctioned posts	Posts filled	Guest faculties
Bangalore University	365	116	50%
Bangalore City University	161	10	93%
Bangalore North University	74	05	82%
University of Mysore	571	169	70%
Karnatak University	620	359	68%
Kuvempu University	238	137	157%
Bidar University	29	00	248%
Hassan University	27	00	74%

Owing to the freeze on recruitment of permanent faculty members, state-run varsities have been left with no option but to enlist the services of guest lecturers – a condition that has prevailed for the past 15 years.

Data sourced from the Department of Higher Education revealed that 12 of the 32 public universities' dependence on guest faculty is more than 100%. Incidentally, several of these universities have hired more guest lecturers than they are allowed to, invariably resulting in the universities having to bear a steadily increasing financial burden.

A Vice-Chancellor of a state-run university pointed out that enrolment for a few programmes at the universities was so high that the authorities were compelled to hire guest lecturers to meet the demand. "The government has not revised the number of sanctioned posts. Universities must hire guest lecturers if the student numbers are high," said the VC.

Replying to a question on the subject in the Legislative Council, Minister for Higher Education Dr M C Sudhakar said that some universities were using internal resources to pay the salaries of guest lecturers. "Some universities are expending more than 50% of their internal resources on guest lecturers' salaries, staff and other office expenses," he said.

Speaker rules out secretariat employees for census work

Says legislature is not subordinate to the executive

BENGALURU, DHNS

A fresh tussle has emerged between the legislature and the executive in the state, with Legislative Assembly Speaker U T Khader objecting to the proposed deployment of assembly Secretariat staff for census work.

In a strongly worded communication to Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) Commissioner Maheshwari Rao M, Assembly Secretariat Secretary M K Vishalakshi, writing on behalf of the Speaker, directed that no Secretariat officers or employees would be deputed for the exercise.

The letter flagged the Speaker's "serious objection" to the GBA's order, noting that the Secretariat had already clarified its independent constitutional status, akin to the Lok Sabha Secretariat, in an earlier communication (on March 27, 2026).

It stressed that the legislature is not subordinate to the executive and any attempt to impose "dual control" over Secretariat staff amounts to an affront to the dignity of the Speaker and the autonomy of the House.

Citing precedent, the Secretary pointed out that no other state deploys legislative staff to perform executive functions.

The communication also referred to a 2011 All India Presiding Officers' Conference resolution, which underscored safeguards to ensure that legislative secretariats remain free from external control, drawing parallels with practices in institutions such as the British House of Commons.

The Secretariat further highlighted operational strain, noting that staff have been handling core legislative duties — including assisting presiding officers, managing members' salaries and pensions, and supporting standing committees' work — without any increase in sanctioned posts. Previous deputations for surveys and election-related work had disrupted functioning and drawn criticism from members, it noted.

In this backdrop, the Speaker has reiterated directions that Secretariat staff should not be deployed for executive assignments such as census work, elections, caste surveys, or voter list revisions going forward.

Joshi flays imposition of lifetime tax on electric vehicles

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Slamming the Karnataka government over its recent electric vehicle (EV) policy decisions, Union New and Renewable Energy Minister Pralhad Joshi on Friday said that the state is moving backwards on clean energy initiatives.

Criticising the Congress-ruled government for withdrawing tax exemptions on EVs and imposing a lifetime road tax, Joshi said these measures would make electric vehicles more expensive and less affordable for common people, especially the middle class.

"The state's decision is indirectly encouraging the use of diesel and petrol vehicles by making EVs costlier," he said in a statement.

He urged the Siddaramaiah-led government to reconsider its approach, warning that such policies could hinder India's vision of a sustainable future.

While other states are actively promoting EV adoption through tax benefits and supportive policies, Karnataka appears to be discouraging green energy alternatives, he remarked.

The minister alleged that the imposition of a lifetime tax on EVs was primarily aimed at increasing revenue, and accused the state government of prioritising short-term revenue generation over long-term sustainable development.

Joshi emphasised that the entire country is moving towards sustainable and clean energy solutions, and expressed concern that Karnataka's actions could undermine broader environmental goals.

HISTORY ON STAGE

A girl, dressed as Kittur Rani Chennamma, participates in a programme at Ravindra Kalakshetra in Bengaluru on Friday. DH PHOTO/PRASHANTH H G

Kerala woman goes missing in Kodagu trek

MADIKERI, DHNS: A 35-year-old woman from Kozhikode in Kerala, who went trekking at Tadiandamol Betta in Madikeri taluk, has gone missing inside the forest.

Sharanya

The missing woman has been identified as Sharanya. She was working in Kochi and had arrived in Kodagu alone. She was staying at a homestay in Yavakapadi village and had booked the trek online. Forest department staff had sent her along with other tourists, stating that they could not allow her to trek alone due to wildlife movement. However, she has not returned.

A team of 60 personnel, including women police and forest staff, has been carrying out a search operation inside the forest. However, she has not yet been traced, police said. Her mobile phone has remained switched off. Police have informed her brother, who is on his way to Kodagu, they added.

Deputy Conservator of Forests Abhishek said, "A total of five teams are involved in the search. Sniffer dogs have also been pressed into service, and a drone is being used for the operation."

Horatti writes to CS on 3rd language, bats for retaining old system

BENGALURU, DHNS

Chairman of the Legislative Council Basavaraj Horatti has urged the government to drop the decision to introduce the proposed grading system for the third language subject in SSLC.

In a letter to Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh, Horatti said that this decision may lead to negligence among children while learning the third language.

"If we look at the SSLC results, there are many students who have got cent per cent by scoring 100 marks even in the third language, especially Hindi. This decision will have a negative impact on the learning level of the children," he said.

Expressing concerns over the teachers teaching the third languages, mainly Hindi, Horatti mentioned, "It is the question of the lives of 15,000 Hindi teachers in the state."

He requested the chief secretary to intervene and give instructions to the officials of the department concerned to drop the decision and retain the earlier system of awarding marks even for the third language subjects in SSLC.

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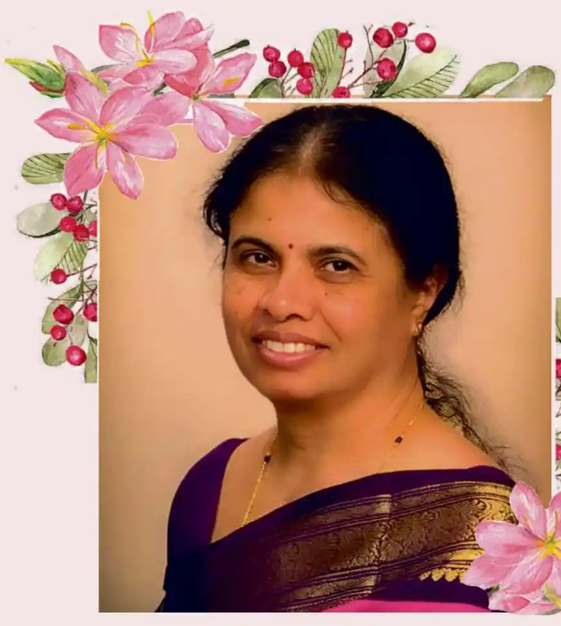

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Chikmagalur District, Karnataka

Justice Santosh Hegde collapses on stage, rushed to hospital

BENGALURU, DHNS: Former Lokayukta Justice Santosh Hegde was rushed to a hospital when he collapsed after delivering a speech at an event here on Friday.

Hegde, 86, was at an event organised by the Bharat Scouts & Guides to honour former minister PGR Sindhia for receiving an honorary doctorate recently by the Gulbarga University. Sindhia is the state chief commissioner of the Bharat Scouts & Guides.

"He vomited after finishing his speech. He wanted to go home and was leaving when he collapsed on stage. He was immediately rushed to hospital in my car as there was no ambulance," Speaker UT Khader, who was the chief guest at the event, said. "He's fine now. His regular doctors are attending to him."

Dr Ramesh Babu, a general surgeon who was at the event, performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), involving an external cardiac massage, to Hegde. "He made a slow speech. After taking his seat, he vomited twice. He wanted to go off stage. While collapsing, the scouts gave him support, which helped. His blood pressure was also low," Babu said, adding that Hegde suffered a syncopal attack.

Greens question road work taken up sans clearances in tiger corridor of Dakshina Kannada

CHIRANJEEVI KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

Environment activists have questioned the road widening work taken up on National Highway (NH) 73 between Ujire and Periyashanthi, a sensitive wildlife corridor in the Dakshina Kannada (DK) district, without obtaining statutory clearances.

The officials, in turn, have pointed to diluted provisions in the law that facilitate such works.

The work on the 28.49 km stretch of road from Ujire to Periyashanthi via Dharmasthala requires 38.80 acres of forest land and 32.62 acres of non-forest land.

According to the highway authorities, the project will turn the highway into a two-lane road with paved shoulders.

The activists, however, noted that a significant stretch of the corridor lies within the Kudremukh-Pushpagiri tiger corridor.

A tree felled at Nidle in Belthangady taluk in Dakshina Kannada district for a road widening work between Ujire and Periyashanthi, a sensitive wildlife corridor in the Dakshina Kannada district.

In addition, frequent sightings of elephants in the area have been reported, along with conflict incidents in the area, they said.

They also pointed to the felling of a tree in a reserved forest area in Nidle, though Stage 1 clearance has not been granted to the project.

Till two years ago, agencies were not allowed to dig non-forest land until they got forest clearance from the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change. However, the Union government amended the Forest (Conservation) Act and revised the rules, which came into effect on December 30, 2023.

The consolidated guidelines issued under the new law, Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, contain a specific provision allowing projects involving forest and non-forest areas to work in non-forest land without clearance.

"To prevent the occurrence of fait accompli situations...in case approval under the Act is declined for widening of road, width of the portion of road falling in the forest land will be maintained at its existing level," it says, adding that the provision is not applicable for projects falling in protected areas.

A forest official noted that the tiger corridors in the area (Nidle, Koukaradi, Dharmasthala and Chibidre corridors) do not enjoy the status of a protected area. "However, we have told the user agency to get clearance from the National Board of Wildlife," he added.

The National Highway Division of the Public Works Department has given an undertaking that it will provide a bridge for elephants at a cost of Rs 20 crore and an "uninterrupted passage" for smaller animals, reptiles and amphibians through a culvert at an estimated cost of Rs 40 lakh.

‘Dishaank’ app info indicative in nature, verification must: Govt

State made its stance clear in affidavit filed before NGT

CHIRANJEEVI KULKARNI
BENGALURU, DHNS

The granular information on land parcels provided through Dishaank app cannot be relied upon without verification, the state government has said, outlining the limitations of the famed digital tool.

Developed by the Karnataka State Remote Sensing Applications Centre (KSRSAC), Dishaank’s android version has registered 50 lakh-plus downloads since launch. The easy access to details like survey number, size of the holding (hissa), ownership details and layers providing information on water bodies, drains and other crucial matters has made it the go-to application among urban and rural population for land-related information.

The government’s stance was made clear in an affidavit filed before the National Green Tribunal by Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh. Specifically, the government was responding to allegations of encroachment of Kembattahalli lake in Uttarahalli hobli of south Bengaluru. The petitioners had claimed that the lake measuring 7.5 acres has shrunk due to encroachment, particularly loss of lake bed in survey number 99 as shown by the Dishaank app.

The chief secretary cited a report submitted by Bengaluru Urban Deputy Commissioner to underscore that the land bearing survey number 99 of Kembattahalli village was originally a private patta land as per the original survey records and no portion of the land has been classified as a lake.

“It is respectfully submitted that survey number 99 is presently depicted as a waterbody in the ‘Dishaank’ mobile application; however, such depiction is only indicative in nature and subject to verification with original records, and necessary steps are being initiated to rectify the same in accordance with authenticated survey documents,” the chief secretary’s affidavit said. Further, she pointed out to the disclaimer that the information provided in the app could not be used for legal purpose or measurement.

CHIEF SECY’S AFFIDAVIT BEFORE NGT

> It is respectfully submitted that survey number 99 is presently depicted as a waterbody in the ‘Dishaank’ mobile application; however, such depiction is only indicative in nature and subject to verification with original records, and necessary steps are being initiated to rectify the same in accordance with authenticated survey documents.

A bench of Justice Pushpa Sathyanarayana and expert-member Prashanth Gargava heard the pleadings and posted the matter on June 8 for final hearing.

The petition by Vilasini Ramkumar and others filed in 2023 has played a major role in getting an alternative burial land for communities who had used about 2 acres of the lake bed for generations. The lake was rejuvenated and a pedestrian path was developed following the tribunal’s orders.

Hindu activists and others gather in front of the Old Hubballi Police Station on Friday. DH PHOTO

‘Love Jihad’ alleged, Hubballi families blame each other

HUBBALLI, DHNS: Hindu activists and relatives of a girl on Friday alleged that a gym trainer attemped ‘Love Jihad’ on the girl and sexually assaulted her, while the boy’s family members refuted the allegation and accused them of assaulting and kidnapping the boy.

The girl’s relatives and Hindu activists visited Sameer Mulla’s house at Rajnagar during which a quarrel ensued. He was handed over to Old Hubballi police. Police Commissioner N Shashi Kumar after obtaining information from the warring parties said that the boy suffered minor injuries in the melee and was admitted to a hospital. He said that a comprehensive probe would be conducted into the incident..

Sameer’s sister stated that the boy and girl were in a relationship for three years and the girl used to visit his house along with her parents. The girl’s community members assaulted and kidnapped Sameer, she charged.

The girl’s father alleged that Sameer’s relatives attacked his house and assaulted them. Her mother accused Sameer of ‘Love Jihad’, blackmailing, and sexual harassment of the girl after making her drink some intoxicant.

Meanwhile, a video of the 20-year-old girl speaking on the incident was shared on social media platforms, in which she said Sameer gave her water mixed with some intoxicant, shot her video and sexually assaulted her. He did this to other girls also, she alleged. Later, she also lodged a complaint with Vidyanagar police, accusing Sameer of blackmailing and rape.

A video of Sameer also surfaced, in which he said the girl herself had shot the video with him, and she is now making allegations due to the pressure from her parents.

Woman injured after cop’s car hits her

BHALKI (BIDAR DISTRICT), DHNS: A woman sustained grievous injuries after a policeman ran her over with his car in Bhalki town on Friday. The injured, Jnanabai (55), was sweeping the road when Umakanth, a constable attached to Mehkar police station, hit her with his car. Police sources said Umakanth has been suspended. A case has been registered in connection with the incident.

Expelled Yatnal campaigns for BJP candidate

BAGALKOT, DHNS: Bijapur City MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, who was expelled from the BJP, campaigned for Veeranna Charantimath, the saffron party candidate in the bypoll to Bagalkot Assembly constituency, on Friday.

Addressing voters at various places in the taluk, Yatnal said that the Congress, in its efforts to appease Muslims, had neglected Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes. He claimed that these voters of these communities will teach a befitting lesson to the Congress in the bypolls. Yatnal said that a “Hindutva government” should be brought to power in Karnataka.

Biocon Foundation to train 25 women in biotech, life sciences

BENGALURU, DHNS: Biocon Foundation, in partnership with BeST Cluster and the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), launched the first BioWISE cohort on Friday, onboarding 25 women students from tier-two and tier-three universities for a six-month training programme in biotechnology, life sciences and allied disciplines.

The cohort comprises 15 postgraduates and 10 undergraduates from across the state. They will receive academic training spanning biotechnology, life sciences, microbiology, bioinformatics, and allied disciplines. The students will be placed with leading academic and industry partners, Institute of Bioinformatics and Applied Biotechnology, Indian Institute of Science, and Biocon. They will work alongside scientists and industry professionals on live research and development programmes.

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Eduverse, Karnataka’s largest education expo, starts today

BENGALURU, DHNS

Students seeking clarity on their academic future have a go-to destination this weekend.

Eduverse 2026, Karnataka’s largest education expo organised by *DH* and *Prajavani*, returns for its 16th edition on April 4 and 5 at Gayatri Grand, Palace Grounds (Gate No 4).

Scan the QR code to register for mock CET and NEET.

The two-day event features over 70 premier institutions under one roof. For the first time, the Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) will host an exclusive stall to guide students through admission processes.

Prasanna H, Executive Director, KEA, will inaugurate the expo on April 4. This will be followed by a session on CET/NEET and COMED-K counselling by Ravi A S, retired PRO and principal, and a session on AI in higher education by Dr J B Simha, Professor and Mentor, REVA University.

Sandalwood actor Dhruva Sarja will be the chief guest on the second day (April 5), which will feature Naganagouda S J, Hon Secretary, NHRD, Karnataka, HR Leader and Influencer, giving expert advice on why an HR career is required. Additionally, Commodore (Dr) Pramod R Kulkarni, Pro Vice Chancellor of School of Design Engeneering at Reva University, will speak on design thinking and technology-driven innovation.

The event will also feature mock CET and NEET exams. There will be exciting prizes for the top scorers and a bumper lucky draw. Seventy universities and institutions will participate in the expo.

Acharya Business School Bengaluru (ABSB) is introducing courses to make students AI-ready, giving them the same baseline of future-ready skills regardless of what programme they’re enrolled in.

Gitam Deemed to be University is adopting an integrated model of teaching and research, operating as a multidisciplinary university system rather than a collection of isolated schools.

Other participating institutions include Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences; Presidency University; Dayanand Sagar University; Reva University; CMR University; Garden City University; Manipal Academy of Higher Education (Bengaluru campus); Shiv Nadar University; Chanakya University; SRM University, Andhra Pradesh; ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education; Cambridge Institute of Technology (CIT), KLE Medical University, Sapthagiri NPS University; Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT); Parul University; East Point Group Of Institutions; RV University; KLE Technological University; Kammavari Sangham Group of Institutions; SDM Education Society, Ujire; The Oxford Educational Institutions; Krupanidhi Group of Institutions; RR Institutions, Bengaluru; Atria Institute of Technology; Birla Global University; Sambhram Group of Institutions; MS Engineering College; Rajarajeswari College Of Engineering; East West Group of Institutions; Khaja Bandanawaz University, Kalaburagi; SEA Group of Institutions; Physicswallah; Vision PU College; Atria University; Vydehi/Vymak Group of Institutions; Sai Vidya Institute of Technology; Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham; ACS College of Engineering; AIMS Institutes; MIT World Peace University, Pune; Amity University; Universal Group of Institutions; HKBK Group of Institutions; The Deccan PU College, Bengaluru; PES University; Keladi Shivappa Nayaka University of Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences, Iruvakki; Ramaiah College of Arts, Science and Commerce; S-Vyasa School of Advanced Studies; Seshadripuram College; IAS BABA; Wonder Spaces; Sanjay Godawat University, Kolhapur; Karnataka State Open University; Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI); ISB&M; SRN Adarsh Group of Institutions; Janatha Education Society; Karnataka State Dr Gangubai Hangal Music and Performing Arts University, Mysuru; MITS Madanapalle Institute of Technology and Science; Vidyavardhaka College of Engineering, Mysuru; and The Rural Education Society Institutions, Kanakapura, among others.

The event opens daily at 9 am. Entry is free for all students and parents.

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Census 2027: Counting on credible data

India's much-delayed census – its 16th and eighth after Independence – started this week and is set to be completed by March 2027. Though many parameters and methodologies have changed over the years, the census remains the most credible exercise in profiling the country, serving as the basis of administrative and development policies for successive governments. The last census was held in 2011; the next edition of the decennial exercise – scheduled for 2021 – was postponed because of Covid. It was delayed even after the pandemic for unspecified reasons. The Union government notified the current census in June 2025. It has since mobilised the systems for the extensive enumeration, which will be covered in two phases.

This census is significant for multiple reasons. As a digital exercise, it is conceived to be more efficient and time-saving. In a country leveraging the progress of the digital age, the census presents an opportunity to combine the capacities of the State and the citizen to the best effect. Individuals can self-enumerate by providing their details through a web-based facility, in 16 languages, before the door-to-door survey commences. Enumerators will collect and submit the data through a mobile app on her/his smartphone. In the first phase of the census, the questionnaire consists of 33 queries, including those related to age, educational qualifications and employment, housing conditions, and assets. For the first time since 1931, caste data will be collected during the second phase of the census. This mapping will have political consequences and is critical to analysing the country's socio-economic profile. Beyond a population count, the exercise involves a compilation of the country's diversities, enabling a true assessment of its character. More than three million enumerators, supervisors, and other officials are expected to be involved in Census 2027.

Findings from the enumeration will inform developmental planning and reshape political representation

Findings from the current census will eliminate a data vacuum caused by the delayed enumeration that had prevented efficient development planning. Resources must be allocated based on current and credible data, factoring in the demographic distribution in terms of geography, socio-economic divisions, and other metrics – Census 2027 will provide this crucial reset. The data from the census will also be of vital use to private sector entities, research institutions, etc. With the delimitation of legislative constituencies linked to the census, the exercise also has a strong political context. While the government is reported to have plans to increase the number of Lok Sabha seats based on the 2011 census, to implement women's reservation, there is no clarity on the possibility of another delimitation exercise linked to the ongoing census.

A wrong turn in the EV story

Karnataka's decision to end a decade-long tax holiday for electric vehicles (EVs) marks a clear policy shift from incentivising adoption to asserting market maturity. The Karnataka Motor Vehicles Taxation (Amendment) Bill, 2026, introduces a tiered lifetime road tax on electric cars and buses from April 1, 2026, while retaining exemptions for two-wheelers. But the assumption that the EV industry has matured warrants scrutiny. The state was an early mover in promoting electric mobility, offering a 100% tax exemption that helped narrow the price gap with conventional vehicles. The Bill proposes a 5-8% tax on vehicles costing below Rs 25 lakh, while those exceeding this threshold are already subject to a 10% levy. For buyers, this translates into a sharp increase in on-road prices, potentially running into tens of thousands or even lakhs. Such a shift threatens to dampen demand, especially among first-time and price-sensitive consumers. Karnataka accounts for a notable share of India's electric car sales, but the supporting ecosystem remains uneven. Charging infrastructure is patchy outside major cities, grid readiness is evolving, and service networks are far from uniform. While range anxiety has eased, it has not disappeared. Taxing a sector still in transition could slow the momentum that policy once sought to accelerate.

By shifting policy from incentives to taxation, Karnataka risks slower adoption and market uncertainty

There are broader economic implications. A sudden pivot from incentives to taxes could introduce uncertainty for manufacturers, fleet operators, and infrastructure providers, particularly when other states continue to offer concessions. Subsidies cannot be indefinite, and global trends point to a gradual withdrawal of incentives. But such transitions must be calibrated, as abrupt shifts tend to unsettle markets. The most contentious element is the provision to levy tax, even on a depreciated basis, on already registered vehicles. This raises serious concerns as buyers who bought vehicles under a zero-tax regime did so with legitimate expectations of continuity. Altering those terms *ex post facto* is unwise policy; it also raises questions of fairness and legal validity. Such provisions are likely to face judicial scrutiny as the Supreme Court has consistently held that laws which extinguish vested rights or impose unreasonable burdens may fall foul of constitutional guarantees.

The real question is how the transition should be managed without the state squandering its pioneering edge. A phased approach, linked to demonstrable improvements in infrastructure and environmental goals, would have been more prudent. In seeking to raise an estimated Rs 250 crore from this policy shift, the government could risk undermining the very progress it helped create, striking at the foundation of the EV industry.

DEBT AND DISTRESS

The democratic costs of farm price suppression

Policy failures have led to depleted farmer incomes. Reform should ensure a statutory MSP and debt relief

T N PRAKASH KAMMARDI

Behind the Union Agriculture Minister's celebration of a record 358 million tonnes of foodgrain output – amplified by the Economic Survey's headline narrative – lies a mounting democratic cost. While the official discourse paints a picture of plenty, the reality for the Indian cultivator is one of systematically suppressed prices, evaporating real incomes, and distress-driven exits from the land.

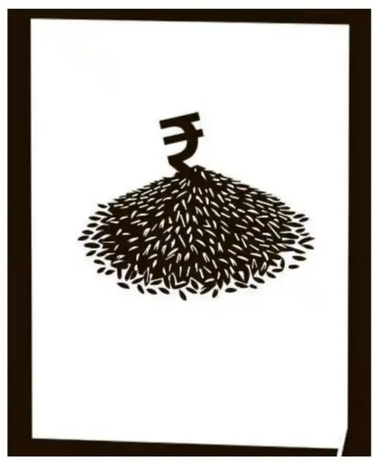
Cheap food for the urban consumer has been secured by shifting the burden of inflation control onto the farmer. Agriculture has been converted into a permanent macroeconomic shock absorber – an outcome not of unintended policy failure, but of deliberate systemic design, recently reinforced by the Union Budget 2026-27's preference for price deflation over farm viability.

In agriculture, the "terms of trade" define the relationship between the prices farmers receive for their produce and the costs they incur to produce it. Over the past decade, this balance has tilted precariously. While the total cost of production has surged in line with the broader non-farm economy, farm-gate prices have persistently lagged. Both the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) and the Reserve Bank of India have repeatedly noted that once these escalating costs – unmatched by a proportionate hike in farm-gate prices – and rising consumption needs are accounted for, the result is a sustained and damaging decline in real farm incomes. In Karnataka's own agricultural heartlands – from the semi-arid ragi and maize belts to the plantation corridors of Malenadu – this divergence highlights a national crisis at a regional scale.

The Minimum Support Price (MSP) regime has become largely notional. During the recent kharif harvest, despite record output, *mandi* prices for groundnut and soybean crashed nearly 26% below the MSP in major markets. This is why the 2019 NSS Situation Assessment Survey found the average monthly income of a farm household to be just Rs 10,218 – barely half that of a regular non-farm salaried worker.

When output prices fail to cover the full cost of production, debt ceases to be a choice and becomes a structural inevitability. In India, nearly 70% of farm households are trapped in a cycle of borrowing, with small and marginal farmers, who constitute 85% of all cultivators, bearing a disproportionate share of this burden.

It is a profound irony of the Indian State that a policy framed as 'support' ends up institutionalising economic distress in agriculture. The current MSP formula is a truncated calculation under which only out-of-pocket costs and unpaid family labour are covered, while a 50% margin is added to this narrow base. This effectively ignores "opportunity costs": the inherent value of the farmer's land and capital. By excluding



these, the State denies farmers the returns they would have earned had their assets been deployed elsewhere.

The Swaminathan Commission's recommendation – Comprehensive Cost (C2) plus a 50% margin – was intended to correct this distortion, yet it remains a "ghost in the machinery" of government. Between 2019 and 2025, the gap between actual market prices and this fair benchmark resulted in a foregone income of Rs 4 lakh crore.

This suppression of farm income reflects a dual failure. On the policy side, MSPs are anchored to partial cost accounting – the exclusion of rental value for owned land and interest on capital – which fails to secure true income parity for the producer. On the market side, price discovery is structurally distorted; consumer price gains rarely reach the farm-gate, as most of the value addition is captured by dominating intermediaries. This is compounded by a persistent neglect of essential infrastructure – storage, logistics, and processing – and a lack of accessible pledge finance, locking cultivators into a cycle of distress sales.

Unlike other major emerging economies that treat farm income protection as a core pillar of economic governance, India's policy elite increasingly views agrarian distress as a problem to be solved through "labour exit", effectively pushing people off the land to facilitate a corporate-led transition.

This strategy, most visible in the controversial reforms attempted during the pandemic and eventually withdrawn due to fierce resistance, signals a move towards the corporate takeover of Indian agriculture. In a mass democracy, suppressing farm incomes while engineering a forced exit is a form of organised economic dispossession. It transforms market failure into a permanent political crisis.

The response is already manifesting on the streets. Mobilisations such as the Samyukta Kisan Morcha's recently concluded Kanyakumari-to-Kashmir march signal that while official obfuscation may temporarily mute protest, it cannot extinguish deep-seated structural grievances. These are costs that policymakers ignore at their peril; when the fields can no longer sustain those who till them, the very stability of our democratic structure is called into question.

A credible course correction

Debt Reset: Accumulated farm debt must be cleared to reverse years of policy-induced adversity and restore economic viability.

Statutory MSP: The MSP must receive statutory backing based on the Swaminathan Commission's C2+50% formula. This must be accompanied by expanded and decentralised procurement beyond wheat and rice to include pulses, oilseeds, and other price-sensitive crops – including vegetables – at scales sufficient to stabilise markets.

The nutrition link: Procured food must be channelled through systems mandated under the National Food Security Act, 2013 – specifically, the PDS, ICDS, and the PM-POSHAN mid-day meal programme. In this way, price support for the farmer simultaneously addresses the national crises of hunger and malnutrition.

MSP must function as a legally enforceable price floor, grounded in the constitutional obligation to secure the livelihoods of those who feed the nation. Sustained State intervention to counter price deflation is not "fiscal charity"; it is an economic necessity. India cannot afford to treat its agrarian heartland as expendable, nor can it allow a callous neglect of its hard-earned self-sufficiency in food production to undermine its national sovereignty.

(The writer is an agricultural economist, former chairman, Karnataka Agricultural Prices Commission, and currently, Member, Karnataka State Policy and Planning Commission)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

An unwilling star at seventy

On social media, personal messages feel rather impersonal

RAJNISH SHARMA

I completed 70 years on March 16, despite my having developed a few chronic ailments. Witty writer Mark Twain's words come to the mind. He said something to the effect of, 'Do not complain about old age. This privilege is denied to many.'

I consider myself fortunate for having lived this long. Long ago I read somewhere that for most people success means becoming famous and well-known, but for a few it means never being found out. I belong to the latter category. I was leading life happily in obscurity and anonymity till the other day.

Since the advent of various social media platforms, I resisted most of them but finally gave into WhatsApp. Now for the last few years, birthday greetings are increasing. This year I received a record 88 greetings mostly from school classmates and professional college class fellows who are part of different WhatsApp groups. I feel like being subjected to false limelight and having become a fake sort of VIP for most of these greetings, as I understand they are sterile and perfunctory. I thanked them all, and I do reciprocate the greetings to them in a customary way whenever the need arises, but I feel like acting as if I were a consummate actor instead of a genuine human being with feelings and emotions.

I thank my friend from electrical engineering, Makhija, who initiated the process of greetings by embellishing my photo on this birthday with his software tricks. Before the day ended, I received the last message from Julka, a batchmate from electronics engineering, which I found a little amusing; it read: 'Happy birthday, Osho *ji* & Good night *ji*'. I extend my sincere thanks to Julka for his ingenuity. Henceforth I will avoid sending personal messages which are devoid of sentiments and connectivity and expect from others that they don't send messages just for the heck of it. However, I will keep this platform on my mobile, as it creates hell of fun and silly humour, mostly risqué, which I can't help enjoying.

I think social media platforms are helping society to connect but in a superficial manner, and in a way they are making its large clientele more and more unsocial in a subtle sense. The analogy can be related to the writing by ChatGPT. The writing may be technically and grammatically correct yet lack a human touch. Likewise, personal messages feel rather impersonal on social media. A sensitive soul amid social media personal messages feels like lamenting, *Darichaa besadaa koee nahin hai*, a ghazal I heard a long time ago and often used to croon: *Main aise jamghate mein kho gayaa hoon, Jahaan mere sivaa koee nahin hai* (roughly translated, this means I am lost in such an indifferent crowd of humans that I feel utterly lonely).

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Mainstream surrendered Naxals, don't exploit them

This is with reference to 'Beyond Naxalism: A chance for lasting peace' (Apr 3). While announcing in Parliament the end of Naxalism in the country, Union Home Minister Amit Shah also referred to 'urban Naxals' and named a few. Anyone who spoke up for the ruthless response of the State was thus named. Those whom the present government refers to as 'urban Naxals' have not supported violence against the State, but have spoken out when injustice was meted out to the tribals or against the blatant exploitation of forest dwellers. It is unfortunate that the Union government has claimed that earlier governments had 'encouraged Naxalism'. However, one needs to be vigilant and alert as to how these people will be mainstreamed and not exploited by taking away their lands, displacing them to mine the possible rich minerals on their lands.

Hemachandra Basappa, Bengaluru

Cost of cricket

The spectacle at Chinnaswamy Stadium masks a grim reality. A single match generates over 12 tonnes of waste and emits roughly 14,000 kg of CO_2 – a carbon footprint reportedly equivalent to thousands of households. The government must stop treating environmental clean-up as a volunteer hobby. Authorities must mandate zero-waste protocols for stadium organisers and enforce heavy polluter-pays taxes on ticket revenue. If the league can generate billions, it must be legally forced to invest in a circular economy and efficient waste management protocol. Entertainment is no excuse for ecological destruction. We need effective policies.

Vijaykumar H K, Raichur

State's responsibility

The detention of several judicial officers who were supervising the conduct of SIR-related issues by anti-social elements allegedly linked to a political outfit at Malda in West Bengal is disconcerting. While the apex court has taken cognisance of the issue, West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee appears to have totally abdicated her responsibility by declaring that the responsibility of maintaining law and order now vests with the ECI since elections have been notified. She is wrong. The CM will be divested of the responsibility only if President's rule is imposed in the state.

K R Jayaprakash Rao, Mysuru

Our readers are welcome to email letters to: **letters@deccanherald.co.in** (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

To those who have taken away my right to speak in Parliament and tried to silence me, I want to say this: do not mistake my silence for defeat — I am a river that turns into a flood when the time comes.

Raghav Chadha, AAP MP
(Reacting to his demotion in Rajya Sabha)

Drama is very important in life: You have to come on with a bang. You never want to go out with a whimper.

Julia Child

TO BE PRECISE

IN PERSPECTIVE

When the leopards divide us

Reactive measures like translocation and paltry compensation for affected communities exacerbate the conflict

SANJAY GUBBI

A black leopard drinks alongside a normally coloured leopard in the backwaters of the Bhadra Reservoir, within the Lakkavalli Range of Bhadra Tiger Reserve. The video, shared widely, delighted safari enthusiasts and the wildlife photography community. Around the same time, an AI-generated video of a black leopard circulated on a YouTube "news" channel, warning residents of alleged attacks in the Malavalli taluk of Mandya district.

One sighting celebrated the wild; the other, though fabricated, fuelled fear. Together, they capture the stark spectrum of public responses to wildlife in India, especially to species associated with human conflict.

India's engagement with wildlife is increasingly split into two divergent realities. On one side are those who experience wildlife through tourism and recreation; on the other are communities that bear the costs – loss of livestock, livelihoods, and occasionally, human life. Unsurprisingly, these losses breed resentment.

The leopard, one of India's most adaptable large carnivores, often finds itself at the centre of this hostility. Its ability to survive in human-dominated landscapes, coupled with relatively modest prey requirements, brings it into frequent contact with people. As a result, conflict is rising across the country.

A key driver of this escalation is the unscientific translocation of leopards. Rather than resolving conflict, translocation often displaces it – sometimes intensifying it in previously unaffected areas.

The landscape encompassing the Cauvery, MM Hills, and BRT wildlife sanctuaries illustrates this trend. Between 2019 and 2022, around 300 human-leopard conflict incidents were recorded here, with *ex gratia* payments totalling Rs 25.4 lakh. Between 2022 and 2025, incidents surged to approximately 1,300, with compensation rising nearly fivefold to over Rs 1.21 crore.

What explains this dramatic increase? Earlier, under pressure from affected communities, the Forest Department frequently translocated leopards to larger reserves such as Bandipur and Nagarahole tiger reserves. In the last three years, however, many leopards have been moved into the Cauvery-MM Hills-BRT landscape, often from distant parts of Karnataka.

Research and field experience show that translocated leopards rarely remain at release sites. Unfamiliar with the new terrain and prey base, they attempt to return to their home ranges, moving through human-dominated areas. This increases encounters with people, often leading to livestock depredation and, in some cases, human casualties. Being territorial, they may also be displaced by resident leopards, compounding instability. The result is predictable: higher conflict.

Translocation, therefore, is not a solution. Forest personnel acknowledge this in private discussions, especially during capacity-building workshops. Yet they point to the intense pressure they face from affected communities demanding immediate action. For many officials, capture and relocation become the only politically and socially viable response, despite their known limitations.

Reactive to preventive

Communities express frustration over compensation. Payments are often delayed and fall well below market value. This erodes tolerance for wildlife, particularly large carnivores like leopards.

Compounding the problem is the role of social media and sections of the mainstream media. CCTV clips of leopard sightings, often stripped of context, circulate rapidly, heightening anxiety. Sensational headlines, dramatic visuals, and misleading narratives amplify fear rather than inform.

In this cycle of blame, the Forest Department points to public pressure, communities highlight inadequate compensation, and systemic constraints limit government response. The result is a pattern of knee-jerk measures – capturing and relocating leopards – that merely shift conflict elsewhere. As incidents rise, communities lose patience, frontline staff bear the brunt of public anger, and the leopards – voiceless in this debate – pay the ultimate price.

Breaking this cycle requires a shift from reactive to preventive strategies. Governments must ensure compensation that reflects market realities and is delivered within a fixed, short timeframe: ideally within a month. Investment in better livestock protection – such as reinforced corrals and improved guarding practices – is essential. Equally important is sustained outreach and education to build awareness and reduce fear.

Unless these long-term measures are prioritised and implemented in both letter and spirit, both people and leopards will continue to suffer. Translocation, elite-sounding task forces, water-harvesting initiatives, and prey augmentation within leopard habitats may appear proactive and politically expedient, but they remain largely reactive. Such measures may offer temporary reassurance, but they fall short of delivering durable solutions.

If India is to truly reconcile conservation with coexistence, it must move beyond optics and commit to interventions that address the root causes of conflict. Anything less will only deepen the divide between those who celebrate leopards and those who live with their consequences – a divide the country can ill-afford as it seeks to safeguard its natural heritage.

(The writer is the author of Leopard Diaries: The Rosette in India*)*

Provisions in the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill have alarmed organisations, as they go beyond 'regulation' and into 'control' of assets

Govt looks to squeeze NGOs further

NOSHIR H DADRAWALA

The introduction of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, in the Lok Sabha on March 25 signals a fresh wave of regulatory tightening, aimed at further constraining NGOs and extending government control.

Some proposed amendments appear to go beyond 'regulation' and into 'control' of assets. The premise that a statute should 'regulate' rather than 'control' is fundamental to law. While the State may 'regulate' activities in the public interest, it must avoid unreasonable restrictions that amount to prohibition, takeover, or total control of rights. In a significant 2022 judgment, the Supreme Court ruled that receiving foreign contributions is not a fundamental right, but a regulated activity that can be restricted to protect national sovereignty.

The government justifies stricter oversight as essential to curb misuse of funds and improve accountability, but the effects on welfare delivery are hard to ignore. Perhaps no other statute demands such transparency and accountability as the FCRA has since its radical 2020 amendment.

For the past five years, all foreign contributions must be received only in the NPO's/NGO's designated FCRA bank account at the State Bank of India, New Delhi Main Branch. Funds must be used solely for the NPO's/NGO's own activities and cannot be sub-granted. Administrative expenditure is capped at 20% of foreign contributions. Annual returns in Form FC-4 require detailed disclosure of receipts and expenditure. Governing board members must file affidavits and the law requires that they are not under any prosecution for any offence.

Given this level of scrutiny, one wonders what further misuse the government seeks to prevent when NGOs already account for every rupee.

For many NGOs, especially those in remote or underserved regions, reduced access to funding and increased compliance burdens have forced scaling back of programmes in health, education, nutrition, and livelihoods, leaving gaps state systems cannot immediately fill. The ban on onward granting has dismantled nodal agencies that once channelled funds from foreign donors to grassroots NGOs after due diligence and monitoring.

What began as the Union government's push for transparency has slowed, if not disrupted, welfare interventions. Heightened scrutiny, risk of registration cancellation, and provisions around asset control are making organisations overly cautious, limiting outreach and innovation. Advocacy itself is increasingly treated as taboo in a sovereign democratic republic.

Historically, civil society in India was vibrant, innovative, and known for research-based advocacy. It has played (and can continue to play) a vital role in nation-building, acting as both a partner and constructive challenger. Civil society creates political and social space for collaborations based on trust, service, and the collective good.

A key proposed change in the current Bill empowers the MHA to appoint a 'Designated Authority' to take over, manage, or dispose of the assets created from foreign funds by NGOs whose FCRA registration has been suspended, cancelled, or not renewed.

Both government and civil society should build institutional relationships based on mutual trust and a shared vision.

Two decades ago, Dr Lester M Salamon and Dr Helmut K Anheier of the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project conducted a research study of the nonprofit sector in 20 countries, including India.

In 1997, the first survey of India's non-profit sector estimated 1.2 million voluntary organisations involving 19.2 million people — equivalent to 2.7 million paid employees and 3.4 million full-time volunteers, a total of 6.1 million. This exceeded the 3.3 million Union government employees in 2000. Contrary to popular perceptions, 51% of receipts were self-generated, 36% came from government grants and loans, and only 7% from foreign sources.

Reportedly, this study influenced the United Nations in formulating the Millennium Development Goals, later replaced by the Sustainable Development Goals. Globally, voluntary organisations are valued; domestically, they remain underappreciated.

India's voluntary sector does more than fill gaps in the government's service delivery—it contributes significantly to GDP and livelihoods. A detailed census study is needed to measure its depth and magnitude, and to demonstrate that 'voluntary organisations go where market solutions don't go'.

While corporate laws have been reformed for transparency and ease of business, civil society has not seen any similar reforms. No one seems to be talking about the 'ease of doing good'.

Startups enjoy incentives, but CSOs face obstacles under the FCRA and corporate social responsibility (CSR) laws. The government should play the role of an empowering agency and act as an enabler.

According to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), about 15,000 organisations are currently registered under the FCRA, while registrations of nearly 22,000 have been cancelled, and another 15,000 have expired.

A key proposed change in the current Bill empowers the MHA to appoint a 'Designated Authority' to take over, manage, or dispose of the assets created from foreign funds by NGOs whose FCRA registration has been suspended, cancelled, or not renewed.

This amendment simply addresses a previously existing legal gap: Section 14A and Section 15 of FCRA 2010, amended in 2020, vests such assets in a "prescribed authority". This proverbial 'sword of Damocles' has hung over NGOs since then. The proposed amendment will now enable a 'Designated Authority' to give effect to the provisions of Section 14A and 15.

There is no need to strengthen restrictive laws or add more compliance requirements given that the government already has ample powers to investigate, through the Comptroller Auditor General (CAG) and the Central Bureau of Investigation, those it believes are not transparent enough.

Instead, the MHA should consider constituting an appellate authority (similar to the income tax appellate tribunal) to address FCRA-related grievances. 'Approval Raj', 'Inspector Raj', and 'Licence Raj' are detrimental to sectoral growth.

Civil society is the glue that binds public and private activity together to strengthen the common good. It has an important role of holding all stakeholders, including itself, to the highest levels of accountability. Civil society embodies 'collective private action for public good', and includes the spectrum of collective action from grassroots movements and community groups to research organisations, think-tanks, structured philanthropies, non-profit organisations, and social enterprises.

The State should enable civil society institutions to promote the welfare of the people in India. It should also establish mechanisms to consult, fund, and collaborate with civil society institutions. A national commission on civil society institutions should be established and made answerable to Parliament.

Finally, the government often questions what public good civil society organisations do apart from voicing dissent. It must understand and accept that dissent itself is a public good in a democracy. Consciousness-raising is integral to democracy.

(Noshir H Dadrawala is an advisor on governance and compliance issues for nonprofits and corporate social responsibility, and is chief executive of the Centre for Advancement of Philanthropy)

FCRA through the years

- **On September 21, 2020**, the Lok Sabha passed the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2020, followed by the Rajya Sabha on September 23
- **On April 8, 2022**, a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court ruled that receiving foreign donations is not a fundamental right and upheld strict regulatory measures
- **On March 25, 2026**, the Foreign Contribution (Amendment) Regulation Bill, 2026, was introduced in Parliament. The Bill proposes allowing the government to take over assets created with foreign funds if an entity's licence is cancelled, expired, or suspended

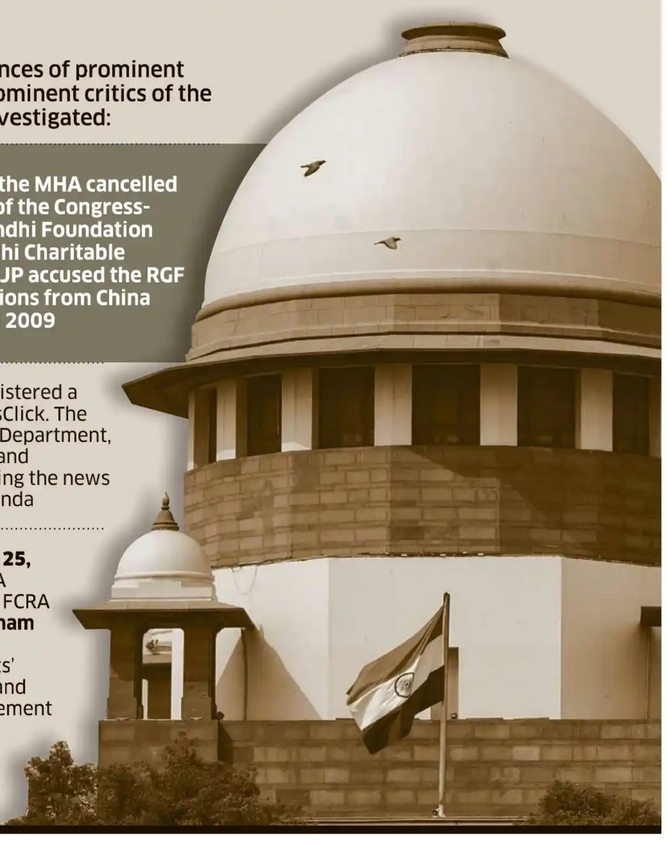
- Various political parties have criticised the Bill and accused the government of further stifling civil society. **On March 31, 2026**, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India wrote to Amit Shah expressing concerns over the Bill
- **On April 01, 2026**, the Narendra Modi government deferred taking up the FCRA Amendment Bill, 2026, in the Lok Sabha

In the crosshairs

Since the 2020 amendment, the FCRA licences of prominent organisations have been revoked, and prominent critics of the Narendra Modi government have been investigated:

- **On December 25, 2021**, the MHA rejected the application for the renewal of the FCRA licence for the Missionaries of Charity. About two weeks later, it was restored
- **In October 2022**, the MHA cancelled the FCRA licences of the Congress-affiliated Rajiv Gandhi Foundation and the Rajiv Gandhi Charitable Trust. The ruling BJP accused the RGF of accepting donations from China between 2005 and 2009
- **On October 11, 2023**, the CBI registered a case against the news portal NewsClick. The CBI joined the ED, the Income Tax Department, and the Delhi Police's Special Cell and Economic Offences Wing, in accusing the news portal of running Chinese propaganda
- **On January 17, 2024**, nearly a year after suspending it, the MHA cancelled the FCRA licence of the Centre for Policy Research

- **On September 25, 2025**, the MHA cancelled the FCRA licence of **Sonam Wangchuk**'s NGO, Students' Educational and Cultural Movement of Ladakh



SCIENCE & ENVIRONMENT

Bird divorce a bad news, here's why

Bird couples separating is not new, but it can also mean their natural environment and habitats are under pressure, writes Aisiri Amin

While social monogamy has come under scrutiny for humans in recent times, about 90% of bird species live in monogamous pairs. But over the last few years, several studies have reported "bird divorces." From the Seychelles warblers to the Great Tits, researchers have documented social behaviours that indicate pair separations.

Behavioural ecologist, specialising in the study of pair-bonding in birds, Dr Frigg Speelman, says divorce among birds refers to a disruption of the pair bond, in which two previously pair-bonded birds are no longer together but are both still alive.

"A pair bond is an exclusive social bond between two birds that reproduce together; they are 'socially monogamous'. Importantly, this is different from strict sexual monogamy since socially monogamous birds can still seek copulations with others, even when they are pair-bonded," she explains.

Over the years, rapid environmental changes and climate-change-driven global biodiversity loss have led to significant imbalances in the ecosystem. While the impact on bird populations has been studied, mating systems have not been widely explored.

As reports of bird divorces are making headlines, a question has become unmissable: are these simply a matter of compatibility, or do environmental disruptions play a role?

Why are birds breaking up

Defining pair bonds and divorce among birds can be tricky. So researchers usually observe pairs over long periods, recording behaviours that signal a pair bond, Speelman elaborates. These include joint parental care, courtship behaviour, affiliative displays such as partner feeding and grooming, consistent physical proximity, and shared territories.

Bird divorce is not new. What has changed, and what is beginning to concern some experts, is why it is happening.

In 2021, a study claimed to report the first evidence of how challenging environmental conditions disrupts breeding processes of a monogamous bird species. While breeding failure was a top reason for breakups among the albatrosses, which are among the world's most monogamous creatures, the researchers found that more albatrosses broke up when the sea was warmer than usual. The study also showed that females in a previously successful relationship are mostly affected by the environmental harshness.

A more recent study, published in 2025, showed that environmental conditions prior to the breeding season appeared to affect mate faithfulness. The researchers found that wind speeds had the strongest impact on whether wild seabird couples stayed together.

The 2024 study, co-authored by Speelman, showed that divorce likelihood among the Seychelles warbler increased when there was either very little or too much rain.

Weather patterns may exacerbate factors linked to failed reproduction and to partners' perceived stress, Speelman says. For instance, it could lead to lower food availability and harsher ambient conditions. "In turn, this may misinform birds, leading them to divorce their partner in times of bad environmental conditions," she explains.

Climate change also exerts various local impacts on different habitats. It is changing local environmental conditions in ways that benefit certain species while harming others. "For instance, it is helping certain generalist bird species like Indian peafowl to colonise, while the specialist group of birds are going extinct," says Dr Jaydev Mandal, Assistant Professor, Department of Zoology, Madhab Choudhury College, Barpeta.

Mandal, involved in citizen science projects to understand the behaviour, distribution, and ecology of birds, explains that environmental changes are bound to affect how birds migrate, nest, and reproduce.

He gives the example of habitat specialist birds, such as those in the bustard family, the Great Indian Bustard, Bengal Florican, and Lesser Florican, which are all grassland species.

Grasslands are under tremendous pressure from succession (a slow process of change in the species composition in an area), invasion, and various other factors, Mandal explains. "So these species are at risk of extinction, or they will shift to some other suitable environment. Within three to five decades, many of these species will go locally extinct from grassland patches that have degraded and can no longer be used for nesting or foraging," he says.

However, currently, studies do not explicitly confirm that climate change is directly linked to bird divorces.

Bird divorces and ecosystem health

The State of the World's Birds 2022 report states that birds are "an excellent barometer for planetary health". Mandal calls them "very good bioindicators". By identifying the diversity of birds in a particular habitat, we can easily assess the condition of that environment, he adds.

"The change in pair-bonds also indicates a change in habitats and possibly how environmental changes are impacting biodiversity," Mandal explains.

At present, many factors contribute to environmental degradation and habitat loss, but Mandal highlights anthropogenic impacts as the primary driver. "Continuous changes in habitat caused by pollution, invasion, and many other human activities cannot be ignored. Beyond these, there are also natural factors such as ecological succession," he explains.

Research on animals' behavioural responses to climate change clearly shows that they can respond very strongly and quickly to climate disruptions. "This is a useful indicator but also a very alarming effect, as changes in reproductive behaviour such as increased divorce can have detrimental effects on entire populations and species over longer periods of time," Speelman says.

She points to a study on little penguins, in which divorce was a better indicator of population-level reproductive success than large-scale oceanographic indices, which are more typically used to predict the effects of climate change on seabird population dynamics.

Divorce is a double-edged sword. While it can help some birds escape poor-quality pair bonds and get a new partner, it can be detrimental if it happens after being misled by extreme weather patterns. "Probably species that are more vulnerable to climate change in general will be more at risk of climate-induced divorce, but for now, we do not know yet," Speelman notes.

Mandal says more collaborative researches are needed, as current studies are sporadic and fragmented, conducted independently across the Western Ghats, Eastern Himalayas, and Eastern Ghats. "These efforts need to be scaled up and carried out in a more coordinated, collaborative manner," he says.

DID YOU KNOW?

Study tracks gold from deep earth

Earth's "gold kitchen" lies deep beneath the seafloor, especially beneath island arcs—volcanic chains formed where one oceanic plate subducts beneath another. These regions are often rich in gold, but the mechanisms behind this enrichment have remained debated. New research led by marine geologist Dr Christian Timm reveals that hydrous mantle melting is a key factor, showing how repeated melting processes deep within Earth concentrate gold over time.

To investigate, scientists analysed 66 volcanic glass samples from the seafloor along the Kermadec island arc and the adjacent Havre Trough near New Zealand. These glasses form when underwater lava cools rapidly, preserving the chemical composition of the original magma. Particularly important were "primitive glasses," which represent magma before it is altered by crystallisation. The team discovered that these samples often contain significantly higher gold concentrations than comparable magmas from mid-ocean ridges.

The researchers measured gold alongside other sulfur-loving (chalcophile) elements such as silver, copper, selenium, and platinum. Because these elements behave similarly during melting, they provide clues about mantle conditions. The data showed that melting beneath the Kermadec arc occurs at relatively high temperatures and under hydrous, oxidised conditions—above the sulfide liquidus. This allows magmas to retain higher amounts of gold.

A key finding is that the mantle in this region has undergone multiple stages of melting. Earlier melting events depleted it, and later remelting further concentrated gold. At high degrees of melting, sulfide minerals—where gold is typically stored—break down, releasing their gold completely into the melt. This repeated, high-degree melting process is the primary driver of gold enrichment in these magmas.

Although the measured gold concentrations are high by geological standards, they are far too low to be economically viable for mining. However, the findings are important for understanding how gold-rich deposits form.

The study shifts focus deeper into Earth, showing that gold enrichment begins in the mantle beneath subduction zones, not just near the surface. It may also help explain why hydrothermal deposits in submarine island arcs are often gold-rich. Ultimately, the research highlights that gold's journey begins with repeated melting in the mantle long before it reaches the surface.

-Phys.org

House prices up as B'lureans seek premium living

Premium houses, From Page 1

There is strong demand for low-density developments that offer privacy, better ventilation, and reduced noise. Interiors are expected to feature high-end materials, modular kitchens with premium fittings, smart home automation, luxury bathrooms and soundproofing, Garg added.

"A large share of new launches in the January-March quarter has been concentrated in the Rs 1.5 crore to Rs 2.5 crore segment, with pricing in several micro-markets moving toward an average of Rs 12,000 to Rs 15,000 per square foot," Vivek Venkateswar, Director - SMP, Shriram Properties Ltd, said.

Pavitra Shankar, Managing Director, Brigade Group, said the price growth seen so far reflects customer preferences shifting toward premium housing, in terms of size as well as positioning. "In our portfolio as well we saw like-to-like product pricing increase by over 50% cumulatively over the last 4 financial years.

Geopolitical tensions on a sustained basis will result in rising input costs for raw materials and the impact on cost structure and eventual pricing to customers is yet to be quantified," she said.

Anarock Group pegs the rise in property prices at 8% in Q1 this year, mainly due to increased new supply in the luxury and ultra-luxury segments.

Karishmah Siingh, President of Sales, Marketing & CRM, Sattva Group, said young homebuyers are showing a strong preference to own homes that align with their lifestyle aspirations, which is expanding demand across segments.

"Micro-markets that offer strong connectivity, infrastructure visibility, and a well-developed social ecosystem are driving prices up in the city," she said.

Amit Shah to attend 'Sant Samagam' in city today

BENGALURU, PTI: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday night reached Bengaluru to take part in 'Sant Samagam' event on April 4, BJP sources said.

Shah reached Bengaluru by a special flight and would stay in a hotel in the city.

BJP state president B Y Vijayendra along with the Leader of the Opposition in the Karnataka Legislative Council Chalavadi Narayanaswamy and MP P C Mohan received Shah at the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) airport.

Hindu saints' meeting

"On Saturday he would attend 'Sant Samagam', a meeting of all the Hindu saints at Nagarur near Nelamangala," a party office bearer told PTI.

He added that the event has been organised by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad under the aegis of Adichunchanagiri Mutt pontiff Sri Nirmalanandanatha Swamiji.

This event is organised every year, the BJP leader said. According to him, after attending the event, the minister would leave by the special aircraft.

Promises overflowed, funds didn't: UKP-3 key poll plank

Karnataka's 'Sugar Bowl' set to test competing pol narratives

SHRINIDHI R
BAGALKOT, DHNS

Congress nominee Umesh Meti

BJP nominee Veeranna Charantimath

The gap between promise and delivery in the implementation of the Upper Krishna Project (UKP) has emerged as a defining issue in the run-up to the April 9 bypoll in Bagalkot Assembly constituency, turning the election into a referendum on development as much as on political credibility.

During the 2023 Assembly campaign, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah had announced an ambitious Rs 75,000 crore allocation for the third phase of the UKP. Three years later, however, only about Rs 9,000 crore has been released, leaving the project far from completion and fuelling discontent among farmers and local stakeholders. The delay has had a cascading effect on irrigation expansion, a critical need in a region heavily dependent on agriculture, particularly sugarcane cultivation.

Bagalkot, often described as Karnataka's 'Sugar Bowl', continues to face structural constraints that limit its economic potential. Incomplete irrigation infrastructure has compounded the challenges faced by farmers, who are already grappling with fluctuating market prices and delayed payments from sugar factories. For many, the stalled UKP phase III represents not just a broken promise but a direct impediment to long-term agricultural stability.

Against this backdrop, the bypoll has assumed significance beyond routine electoral politics. The Congress has fielded Umesh Meti, son of late MLA H Y Meti, seeking to leverage both legacy and the ruling party's welfare guarantees. The BJP, in contrast, has nominated seasoned leader Veeranna Charantimath, a three-time MLA with deep organisational roots, who is contesting his sixth election.

The electoral arithmetic, however, is layered with local dynamics. In 2023, Charantimath's defeat was partly attributed to internal divisions, with his brother Mallikarjun Charantimath contesting as an Independent and splitting the BJP vote on a Hindutva plank. Although Mallikarjun has since joined the Congress, one has to see whether his support base will seamlessly transfer to the ruling party.

Community alignments also appear to be shifting. The Lambani community, traditionally aligned with the BJP, had distanced itself during the previous election over the internal reservation issue. There are indications that sections of the community are now gravitating back towards the BJP, disillusioned with the Congress as well.

Both parties have sought to frame the campaign around development, prominently highlighting the UKP phase III and the proposed government medical college. Yet, on the ground, the contest appears to reflect a broader ideological and policy divide - between the Congress's welfare-driven approach and the BJP's emphasis on Hindutva and governance critique.

The Congress is banking heavily on its guarantee schemes to consolidate rural support, particularly among women and economically weaker sections. The BJP, meanwhile, has questioned the fiscal sustainability of these schemes, arguing that they risk diverting resources from capital-intensive projects such as irrigation and infrastructure.

Bagalkot's electoral profile adds another layer of complexity. With a near-equal distribution of urban and rural voters, the constituency has historically witnessed a split mandate. Urban areas have tended to favour the BJP, aided in part by Charantimath's association with influential institutions such as the Basaveshwara Vidyavardhak Sangha. Rural areas, on the other hand, have remained a stronghold of the Meti family.

Voter sentiment reflects this duality. While some acknowledge Charantimath's track record and organisational strength, others point to the tangible benefits of welfare schemes introduced by the Congress government, suggesting that even partial implementation could influence voting behaviour.

Caste equations further shape the contest. Lingayats form the largest voting bloc, followed by Kurubas, Muslims, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Lambanis. Each group holds the potential to tilt the balance in a closely fought election.

Women voters (1,32,476) outnumber men (1,26,761), making them a potentially decisive factor. The presence of first-time voters, senior citizens, and other special categories add to the complexity of electoral mobilisation.

In all, Bagalkot bypoll is poised to test competing political narratives. For the Congress, retaining the seat would reinforce its governance model and welfare agenda. For the BJP, a victory would not only signal a revival in northern Karnataka but also provide momentum ahead of the 2028 Assembly elections.

Bagalkot Assembly Constituency

2,59,260 Total voters | 1,26,761 Male | 1,32,476 Female

2023 result Cong BJP

H Y Meti (Cong)	79,336
Veeranna Charantimath	73,458

2026 bypoll candidates

Veeranna Charantimath

Umesh Meti

Bypoll campaign sees Congress, BJP trade barbs

Parties blame each other but shy away from moving EC

BENGALURU, DHNS

The bypolls to Davangere South and Bagalkot Assembly constituencies is turning into a prestige as well as mudslinging battle.

State BJP president B Y Vijayendra, during a door-to-door campaign in Bagalkot, alleged that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah was camping, along with 10-15 cabinet ministers, but his 'suitcase' would not work.

Leader of Opposition in Council Chalavadi Narayanaswamy too stated that the chief minister had camped in Bagalkot for five days fearing that the BJP would sweep the bypoll. "He is busy distributing Rs 5 lakh to Rs 10 lakh in every village," he alleged.

Meanwhile Siddaramaiah slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi alleging he was the only prime minister who is facing charges of misuse of the voters' list and the Election Commission.

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, who accused the BJP of "vote-theft" in Bagalkot, alleged that students studying in a college, run by the BJP candidate Veeranna Charantimath, were being forced to make a second voter ID card (duplication) by threatening to fail them in the exam. "Students now have two voter ID cards. I appeal to them to retain the one made at their home town and surrender the other. We have a team already looking into such malpractices by the BJP. We will petition the ECI," he added.

Even as political parties are making the allegations but shying away from petitioning the EC, the Commission has confiscated Rs 1.3 crore in cash and liquor worth Rs 25 lakh, impounded 17 vehicles and filed 55 FIRs in the last 10 days. The Excise department has booked 27 Heinous cases, 30 cases for breach of licence conditions and 154 cases under Section 15 (a) of Karnataka Excise Act 1965 for consumption of liquor in unlicensed public places.

The EC has deployed 60 flying squads, 72 static surveillance teams, 22 video surveillance teams, 24 sector officers, an expenditure observer and set up 24 checkposts in Bagalkot. In Davangere South, it has deployed 24 flying squads, 33 surveillance teams, two video surveillance teams, 27 sector officer and set up 11 checkposts.

Mamata blames Owaisi for gherao of judicial officers

Mamata, From Page 1

Mamata did not directly name Owaisi but dropped enough hints that she was referring to the AIMIM chief, himself, who addressed an election rally in Murshidabad on Wednesday.

The AIMIM allied with the Aam Janata Unnayan Party launched by Humayun Kabir, a member of the outgoing legislative Assembly. Kabir was suspended from the TMC after he announced his plan to build a replica of Babri Masjid in the state.

"One incident in Malda has tarnished Bengal's honour. The local people are not responsible for it. They may have grievances. But the people who trapped the judges were outsiders," Mamata said at an election rally in Habibpur in Malda. "A cuckoo of the BJP has come from Hyderabad along with some communal people. They are behind all this. We have caught them red-handed. (The) CID (of the West Bengal police) picked them up from the airport."

Mofakkarul Islam, an advocate and the alleged mastermind of the incident, was arrested by police from Bagdogra airport in North Bengal when he was reportedly preparing to fly to Bengaluru. His aide, Akramul Bagani, was also picked up along with him.

Three cases had been registered against Islam for allegedly provoking the protesting mobs through his speeches at different venues, K Jayaraman, Additional Director General of Police (North Bengal), said.

Re-examine switch from marks...

Gehlot, From page 1

Hindi is the widely picked as the third language subject. Over 7.5 lakh students have Hindi as their third language, followed by English (32,000) and Kannada (11,400). Urdu, Sanskrit, Tulu, Konkani and Marathi are the other third-language subjects.

The government has argued that the decision to introduce grades was aimed at reducing pressure on students, many of whom fail the Hindi subject.

Gehlot has received a representation from the Association for Preservation of Local Languages, Bengaluru, raising concerns over the decision.

"The representation highlights the significant role played by the third language in fostering linguistic diversity, awareness and intellectual development among students," Governor's Special Secretary R Prabhu Shankar stated in the letter to Rajneesh.

"It has been pointed out that the proposed system of awarding only grades, in place of marks, may inadvertently diminish the academic importance of the subject and affect students' motivation to engage seriously with it," the Lok Bhavan said.

"The concerns raised also reflect apprehensions among teachers, parents and educationists regarding the long-term implications of such a policy decision on the overall quality and inclusiveness of school education in the state," it said. Gehlot, the letter stated, "has taken note of the issues raised" and wants the government to review the decision "keeping in view academic and administrative aspects across the education sector".

The Lok Bhavan has urged the government to consult the department of school education and other authorities and "take such action as deemed appropriate in the larger interest of students and the state's educational objectives".

The Opposition BJP has slammed the government, calling its decision "political and unilateral".

Siddaramaiah hits back at BJP's 'money power' charge

BAGALKOT, DHNS

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday said that the Congress party would win both the bypolls - Bagalkot and Davangere South - and that the party will win the 2028 Assembly polls and retain power.

Addressing an election rally at Bevinamatti, Siddaramaiah rubbished the BJP's charge that the Congress was misusing power and money to win the bypolls. "The BJP is unmatched in telling lies. I do not react much to the BJP. They are making false charges out of fear of losing bypolls. Their allegations on borrowing, empty coffers and on stalled works have no substance," the CM said.

What did they do for Dalits, farmers and the poor when their party was in power for nine years? They drew blank on development and welfare programmes. Hence, they are spreading lies, he charged.

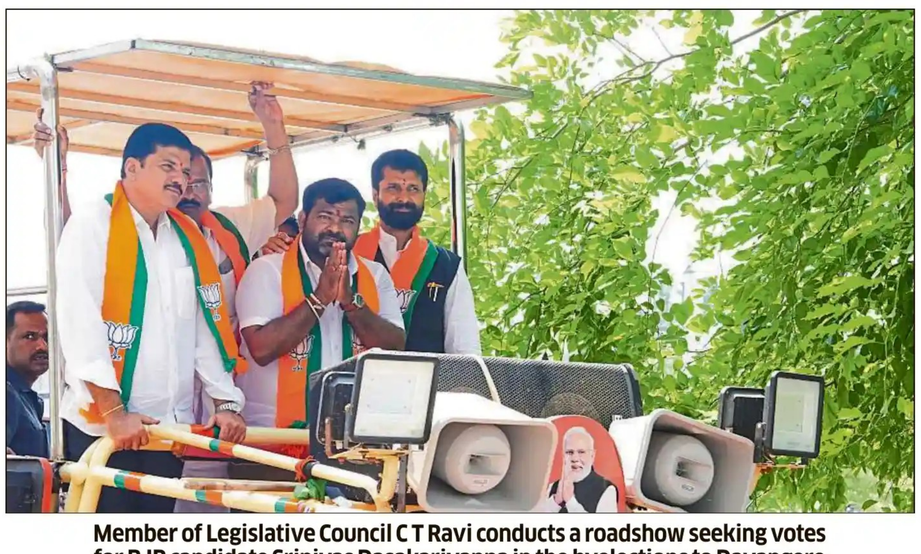
Siddaramaiah asserted that the borrowings and fiscal deficit are within the limits of the Karnataka Fiscal Responsibility Act. "We couldn't present a revenue surplus budget due to the Centre's GST rationalisation. Because of which we fell short on tax collection by Rs 10,000 crore. Also, the Centre did not release Rs 15,000 crore under Jal Jeevan Mission," he said.

Speaking to reporters, the chief minister accused the BJP of adopting double standards by roping in ousted MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal to campaign for its Bagalkot nominee Veeranna Charantimath.

The BJP, having realised that they would lose the election, brought back the leaders they had expelled for campaigning. The BJP had expelled him (Yatnal) and now they've brought him to campaign for its candidate. Isn't this a double standard?, the CM questioned.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, along with Bagalkot bypoll Congress candidate Umesh Meti, performs an aarti at Muchakandi Veerabhadreshwara temple in Bagalkot taluk, on Friday. DH PHOTO

WOOING VOTERS



Member of Legislative Council C T Ravi conducts a roadshow seeking votes for BJP candidate Srinivas Dasakariyappa in the byelections to Davangere South constituency, in Davangere on Friday. DH PHOTO/SATISH BADIGER

Confusion over rural job scheme...

Migration, From Page 1

At the same time, disruptions in the construction and hospitality sectors in cities due to the West Asia conflict have further exacerbated their situation.

The Union government introduced the Viksit Bharat — Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB–GRAM G) Act, 2025, replacing the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005, in December 2025. The Karnataka government had passed a resolution opposing the VB–GRAM G Act.

Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Priyank Kharge said that the Union government has not given clarity on the scheme. "We have written multiple times to the Centre and also spoken to the Union minister in this connection," he added.

Rural people seek jobs after the completion of harvesting for the rabi season until February. They usually engage in various works like constructing farm ponds, borewell recharge pits, check dams and desilting lakes for three months starting in April.

However, due to absence of agricultural activities and MGNREGS works, many have left their villages. Farmers suffered loss due to crop damage from floods and heavy rainfall last year in Kalaburagi, Belagavi, Dharwad, Raichur, Bidar, Yadgir, Koppal and several other districts. They are unable to repay loans taken for seeds and fertilisers because the meagre government compensation.

"I am engaged in gardening work at a multi-national company in Marathahalli, Bengaluru, along with my wife. My two children are also engaged in construction work in the city. Lack of agricultural activities and MGNREGS works prompted us to leave our village," said landless farmer Mallappa Channur from Honna Kiranagi village in Kalaburagi taluk.

K Mahantesh, general secretary of the Karnataka State Building & Other Construction Workers' Federation and a labour union leader, said construction work in major cities has declined somewhat since the start of the war in West Asia.

"Migrant labourers in the construction sector will be left without jobs if the war continues. The rising cost of materials including paint, cement and steel will affect this sector," he added.

Kalaburagi Hotel Owners Association president Narasimha Mendon claimed that there are fewer jobs for rural labourers in cities due to shortage of commercial cylinders due to the war.

MGNREG scheme field assistant Sadashiva Hydra claimed that a Rs 1.80-crore action plan was submitted to the zilla panchayat in November last year after holding a gram sabha on October 2. "We have not yet received approval for the action plan. Honna Kiranagi gram panchayat has more than 700 job card holders. We usually start work under the scheme from April 1 every year. But, 20% of them have left our village and more will migrate if work is not undertaken soon," he added.

Meanwhile, Kalaburagi zilla panchayat CEO Bhanwar Singh Meena claimed that there is limited scope under the scheme because the action plan has not been approved.

Raichur ZP CEO Ishwar Kumar Kandoo said workers are employed in the 25-30% pending MGNREGS works.

Officials in Davangere claimed that the Centre has not yet made complete payment for the works done.

LPG crisis acute, half of B'luru pumps shut

LPG, From Page 1

Government-controlled agencies such as Indane, HP and Bharat Petroleum are selling LPG at around Rs 85 per litre, while private players are charging as much as Rs 120-125 per litre. Before the crisis, LPG cost about Rs 58 per litre.

Chetan Gowda, manager of a private gas station said, "We have not received stock for three days. For the last few weeks, our supply was down from four tonnes of gas to two tonnes and now nil. We have no idea when the supply will return to normal."

Long queues of autorickshaws, some stretching up to three kilometres, have become a common sight. Many drivers have been lining up from as early as 5 am, only to be turned away after hours of waiting.

Krishna Swamy, an auto driver, said, "I am still running on gas I filled two days ago. I couldn't refill yesterday or today. I am now reluctant to take passengers, fearing I might run out anytime." Sarvana, another driver, said, "After waiting for hours, I was allowed to fill only about five litres. That will take me around 40–50 km. At least I can try to recover some money if I get passengers."

Hundreds of auto drivers are now worried about their livelihoods and risk falling into debt.

"We are paying up to Rs 125 per litre. From Rs 58 to Rs 125, the rise happened in a blink. If the situation continues, we might have to end up selling our autos just to be able to eat," said Shankre Gowda. Passengers have not yet fully felt the impact, thanks to electric and CNG-run autos. However, some commuters report longer waiting times.

In a statement, IndianOil said all its retail outlets were fully operational and adequately stocked with petroleum products.

"Auto LPG is available across our network. In case of longer wait times, please note that most auto LPG vehicles are bi-fuel and can run on petrol as well. Switch to petrol and continue your journey without interruption," it stated.

◆ WEATHER ◆

Overview: Dry weather prevailed over Coastal Karnataka, South Interior Karnataka and North Interior Karnataka

Forecast April 04: Dry weather likely to prevail over the state.

INTERIOR NORTH

Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Belagavi	33.2	18.6	00
Bidar	35.6	22.4	00
Vijayapura	35.6	19	00
Dharwad	33.8	18.8	TR
Haveri	32.6	20.2	00
Kalaburagi	38.6	24	00
Raichur	36.4	22.2	00
COASTAL			
Honnavar	34.1	24.9	00
Karwar	35.8	25.8	00
Shirali	NA	NA	NA
Mangaluru	34.2	24.7	00

INTERIOR SOUTH

Stations	Max	Min	Rain
Agumbe	31.3	19.2	17.5
Bengaluru	32.4	22.8	00
Ballari	NA	NA	NA
Chamarajanagar	NA	NA	NA
Chikkamagaluru	NA	NA	NA
Chitradurga	35.3	21.5	00
Davangere	35.5	19	00
Hassan	33.7	14.5	00
Mysuru	34	20	00
Madikeri	NA	NA	NA
Kolar	34	17	00

OTHER STATIONS

New Delhi	36.8	22.4	00
Kolkata	37.4	26.2	00
Mumbai	31.8	22	00
Chennai	36.1	25.1	00
Pune	34.6	17.8	65
Hyderabad	35.4	24.6	00
Th'puram	34.7	26.2	00

During the 1962 India-China war, Nehru bid 'Ta Ta, bye-bye' to Assam... But the BJP will not give a single inch of land to anyone
Political Theatre
BJP have the remote control, but we have the EVM button, which they cannot take away from us

Poll vault

Asset contrast

Hailakandi Assembly constituency in Assam's Barak Valley is in the spotlight as the richest candidate in this election, Rahul Roy, with assets worth over Rs 260 crore, prepares to face five Independent candidates with the lowest declared assets. Two candidates, Dhrubo Chakraborty and Jibon Roy, have declared zero assets, while three others, Gautam Nath, Foriz Zaman Mazumdar and Ajit Nunia, have declared assets of just Rs 400, Rs 500 and Rs 2,000, respectively. There are 12 candidates in the fray, with the main contest expected between Congress' Roy BJP's Milon Das.

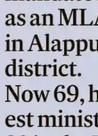
SUMIR KARMAKAR, GUWAHATI

Ideological shift

Congress veteran GK Moopanar opposed the BJP till his last breath, ensuring that his breakaway faction, the Tamil Maanila Congress (TMC), never aligned with the saffron party. To counter the BJP, he joined the AIADMK-led alliance in the 2001 polls – ironically, he had launched the TMC in 1996 to oppose the Congress alliance with J Jayalalithaa – to take on the DMK-BJP combine. His son, GK Vasan, who served as a Union Minister from 2006 to 2014 under UPA-I and UPA-II, quit the Congress in November 2014 and revived the TMC. Though aligned with the BJP since 2019, Vasan's TMC had been contesting elections on an independent symbol. However, in this election, TMC candidates are contesting on the BJP's symbol.

ETB SIVAPRIYAN, CHENNAI

Meet the leader



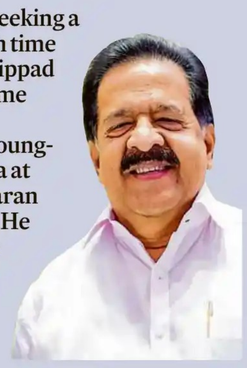
Ramesh Chennithala
Congress
Harippad in Alappuzha

The usual revolving-door pattern in Kerala politics between the Congress-led UDF and the CPM-led LDF broke in 2021, with the former suffering a second consecutive defeat. It was almost like Congress senior leader Ramesh Chennithala losing the CM's post between the cup and the lip.

Had the UDF won the 2021 polls, Chennithala, then Leader of the Opposition since 2016, would have been the natural frontrunner for the top job. Instead, in the post-defeat shake-up, he ceded space to VD Satheesan as Congress Legislative Party leader and LoP. However, Chennithala appears to have taken a step back to push forward with renewed vigour. One of the seniormost active Congress leaders in Kerala, he has remained visible, raising multiple corruption charges against the government over the past five years. Veteran leaders PJ Kurien and K Sudhakaran have projected him as the next CM, even as the Congress high command maintains that the decision will be made only after the elections.

Chennithala is now seeking a mandate for the sixth time as an MLA from Harippad in Alappuzha, his home district.

Now 69, he was the youngest minister in Kerala at 28 in the K Karunakaran government in 1986. He later served as home minister from 2014 to 2016 in the Oommen Chandy government.



Trivia

Apart from being close friends before parting ways, former Tamil Nadu Chief Ministers M Karunanidhi and M G Ramachandran had one more thing in common. Both never lost an election in their lifetime, even though the parties they led, the DMK and the AIADMK, faced electoral defeats. Karunanidhi was elected to the Assembly 13 times since 1957. He skipped the 1984 elections and instead entered the Legislative Council, which was later abolished in 1986. MGR contested Assembly polls five times, twice as a DMK nominee and thrice as AIADMK general secretary, and won each time.

Munambam Waqf land row drags on despite assurances, electoral gains

Locals say they still support BJP as Cong, Left parties disappointed them

FROM THE GROUND

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
MUNAMBAM (KOCHI), DHNS

It has been a year since Union Minister for Minority Affairs Kiren Rijiju visited the coastal village of Munambam near Kochi in Kerala and assured the 610 families that their concerns over the Kerala Waqf Board's claim on their lands would be resolved with the Waqf law amendment brought by the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre.

One year down, the plight is unchanged, even as the NDA won local-body elections in the region for the first time.

Political interventions have even led to division in the joint agitation by the 610 families — mostly Christians but also including Hindus.

On the 414th day of the stir on November 30, a section ended the stir that was underway on the premises of the Venkani Matha Church at Munambam after the ruling CPM in Kerala assured them relief.

However, another section decided to go ahead with the stir with the BJP-NDA's support, holding the CPM government responsible for their plight.

"We received no relief at all," says Stella — who was one of the two women on a relay hunger strike during the 535th day of agitation — when *DH* visited.

KERALA
Assembly Poll

The scorching sun couldn't deter their hopes as they sat in a worn-down shed near a huge seawall. "We are now living only on hope; we have no other option. Many of us have been forced to postpone our children's marriage and higher studies, home maintenance, and even medical needs as we could not raise money by mortgaging or selling our land," said Stella.

The site of the Munambam agitation. DH PHOTO

Vincent, another resident, said: "We are now pinning hopes on the BJP. Earlier, all of us were either with the Congress or the Left parties. But since they could not help us, we have shifted our loyalty to the BJP."

BJP candidate Kunjumon Augustine won the Munambam Kadappuram ward in the Pallippuram panchayat at Munambam.

Fr Antony Xavier Tharayil, parish priest of the Velankani Matha Church, said the decision to end the stir temporarily was taken as two state ministers came down and assured the people that their problems would be resolved.

"The ministers assured us relief following the Kerala High Court observations in October that the Waqf board declaration of our land as Waqf land was not legal. But still, the state Waqf board is opposing us, and the SC even stayed the HC order," said the priest.

Plan to resume stir

The action council is now planning to resume the stir, said its leader Joseph Benny.

Fr Tharayil said the people here would use their conscience to elect those who could resolve their issues.

The land row started in 2019 with the state Waqf board claiming the land owned by around 610 families, saying they had been donated to the Farook College in Kozhikode by one Siddique Sait in 1950.

By 2022, the families were unable to pay land tax at the village office.

Even as the state government issued orders allowing them to pay tax, a forum under the Waqf Samrakshana Samithi (Waqf protection forum) banner moved the court against the decision and got it stayed.

Communal campaign against IUML sparks row

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS: A communal campaign against Indian Union Muslim League's woman candidate Fathima Thahliya is snowballing into a major row in Kerala.

Thahliya is a UDF candidate at Perambra where the sitting CPM MLA and LDF convener TP Ramakrishnan, is in the fray.

A video of the communally toned campaign against Thahliya from an LDF campaign vehicle recently came out. As it triggered strong resentment, Ramakrishnan said on Friday that LDF did not prepare any such campaign material. While there were reports that the EC sought a report from Ramakrishnan on the basis of a UDF petition, he denied any such communication.

Strong pro-incumbency in favour of NDA: Sonowal

Sarbananda Sonowal was BJP's indigenous face against the Congress in Assam before Himanta Biswa Sarma switched sides in August 2015. BJP formed its first government in Assam in 2016 and Sonowal became the chief minister. He was, however, replaced by Sarma after NDA's second consecutive victory in 2021. As Assam gets set for the April 9 elections, the Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways told *DH*'s **Sumir Karmakar** that there is no anti-incumbency in Assam.

ASSAM
Assembly Poll

What makes BJP so confident about forming the government despite possibility of anti-incumbency?

People across India have demonstrated deep faith in the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Assam too remains an equal partner in this transformative journey. On the ground, there is strong pro-incumbency in favour of the BJP-led NDA government, driven by consistent delivery of welfare schemes and people-centric governance since 2016. From the fringes of national imagination, Assam, as the heart of the North East, has moved to become the 'Ashta Lakshmi' of our country. Its reimagined role as the growth engine of new India is surely giving a flip to the region's relegated past of violence and obscurity towards a new dawn of peace, progress and prosperity.

Under your leadership in 2016, BJP came to power with the promise of protecting *jati, mati* and *bheti* (community, land and hearth). How far the party has succeeded in that direction in the past 10 years in power?

The protection of *jati, mati* and *bheti* is not just a political slogan for us — it is a civilisational commitment. In the last decade, for the first time in Assam's history, lakhs of indigenous families have received land pattas, securing their rightful ownership. We have taken firm action to reclaim encroached land, protect Satra lands and preserve our cultural and linguistic identity. Congress has always toyed with the idea of indigenous identity. For more than six decades under the Congress government, people were robbed of their rightful demand for identity protection. Today, identity is being protected through policy, governance and intent. BJP also promised to solve the citizenship crisis of the post-1971 Hindu migrants despite opposition by the indigenous communities.

The Congress is contesting with a bigger alliance this time. How tough is the challenge for BJP?

Alliances built on opportunism cannot match a coalition built on trust and performance. The BJP-led NDA's strength comes from the people of Assam, not backroom arithmetic. On the ground, there is a strong pro-incumbency.

After the 2021 elections, BJP replaced you with Himanta Biswa Sarma saying that Sarma would serve as the CM for the next five years. Is Sarma the CM face in this election?

The BJP does not operate on personality-driven politics; we operate on performance, leadership and collective responsibility. Under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Himanta Biswa Sarma has provided strong governance and it has accelerated development across sectors. Our focus is not on projecting individuals, but on delivering results for the people of Assam.

MODI FANFARE

BJP supporters gather during a roadshow led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi (not seen in picture) ahead of the Puducherry Assembly elections. PTI

Annamalai no-show forces BJP to move on

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

It took the BJP 10 days to finalise 27 candidates for the April 23 Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, an unusual delay for a party known for swift decisions. The high command kept delaying finalising candidates, as leaders hoped to convince its former state chief K Annamalai to contest this time.

However, Annamalai is learnt to have stood firm, refusing to contest but promising to campaign for NDA candidates despite intense efforts by BJP seniors in New Delhi.

As it became increasingly evident that Annamalai, the most charismatic face of the BJP in the state, would not budge, the party released its list on Friday, 10 days after AIADMK had allotted and identified the 27 seats.

Annamalai has kept a low profile since stepping down as the TN BJP chief to facilitate the party's alliance with the AIADMK. The former IPS officer has had several run-ins with Edappadi K Palaniswami, and they don't share a good rapport. AIADMK may have denied Singanallur, for it did not want Annamalai to contest and emerge as a challenger to the party in the region.

TAMIL NADU
Assembly Poll

He had publicly argued that the BJP would grow in TN only by contesting independently for a few polls without an alliance with Dravidian parties.

It is also said that the BJP asked for Singanallur, part of the Coimbatore Lok Sabha seat where Annamalai finished as runner-up, pushing AIADMK to the third spot in 2024, but the Dravidian party refused to allot more than one seat in the Coimbatore district. Coimbatore (North) is with the BJP.

On March 25, as the AIADMK and BJP rushed to identify the seats, Annamalai expressed displeasure over the constituencies allotted to BJP.

Sources told *DH* that several leaders spoke to Annamalai, asking him to contest the elections in the party's interest, but he was firm. "They felt that the party would get mileage from its supporters if Annamalai contested," the sources said.

CULTURAL CLASH

Bengal's fish politics gets too hot for BJP to handle

KALYAN RAY
DHNS

Bengal's well-entrenched cultural identity of *mache bhate bangali* (rice and fish make a Bengali) has turned into a political hot potato in poll-bound West Bengal, with the Trinamool Congress (TMC) telling people that the BJP would end their fish-eating habit even as the saffron party tries hard to counter the narrative.

WEST BENGAL
Assembly Poll

But every round of campaigning involving fish and every interview by leaders to claim that they won't restrict Bengalis' dietary habits puts the BJP on the back foot in a state where it is largely seen as a vegetarian outsider. Its track record in other states is not helping matters.

"It's not that Bengalis don't relish vegetarian food. But they won't tolerate any dictum imposing restrictions on personal food choices. Why should someone else decide if I eat fish? It will be difficult for the BJP to close the gap with Bengalis on such dietary reservations," food columnist Surbek Biswas told *DH*.

For centuries, fish has been synonymous with Bengal. Be it Durga Puja, weddings, or even funerals, the finny tribe is an integral part of Bengali rituals, customs, and daily life. In many temples, they are offered as *bhog*.

According to researcher Shreshtha Chakraborty, a guest lecturer at Alipurduar Mahila Mahavidyalaya in North Bengal, Shol *machh* (big-headed snake fish) is believed to be one of the *vahana*s or vehicles emblematic of *ghater mashan*, a folk deity worshipped by the Rajbanshi community — the single largest Scheduled Caste group in West Bengal, comprising more than 18% of the state's 2.14 crore SC population, as per the 2011 census.

The Thali image shared by TMC on X welcoming Home Minister Amit Shah to Bengal on Thursday.

> It's not that Bengalis don't relish vegetarian food. But they won't tolerate any dictum to impose restrictions on personal food choices.
> — Surbek Biswas, Food columnist

Incidents like the shutting down of fish (and meat) shops in BJP-ruled states for nearly two months every year, Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Vijay Kumar Sinha's comments on restricting meat-selling and the assault on a chicken-patties seller during a mass Gita recitation ceremony in Kolkata — with the finger of blame pointed at the saffron party — give the TMC space to steer away attention from anti-incumbency and corruption issues.

To counter this, Bidhannagar BJP candidate Sharadwat Mukherjee campaigned carrying a 5-kg Catla, while Pandaveswar's BJP candidate Jitendra Nath Tiwari filed his nomination papers accompanied by a "fish procession".

Senior Bengal BJP leaders like Union Minister Sukanta Majumder and state president Samik Bhattacharya accused the TMC of spreading misinformation, stressing that there won't be any fish ban. "But such interviews show BJP candidates are already on the back foot," noted Biswas.

Bengal's unique geography explains the *machhe bhate bangali* culture that found a place in literature — from ancient Sanskrit texts to modern Bengali classics. "Rice and fish are staples because of low-lying land intertwined with rivers and ponds. In our culture, Durga puja ends with an offering of two Hilsas to the Goddess," said Sushanta Sengupta, chief chef at Kolkata's popular Bengali cuisine restaurant 6 Ballygunge Place.

The state's electoral battle is increasingly being fought not merely over SIR, jobs, corruption, or governance, but on Bengali identity. And, the humble fish has swum to the centre of the political pond.

TN Cong leaders unhappy with choice of candidates

CHENNAI, DHNS: The Congress' choice of candidates in Tamil Nadu has created discontentment in the party.

Many deserving Congress members were denied ticket in Tamil Nadu because "constituencies were sought from the DMK after deciding the candidates", said Karur MP S Jothimani on Friday.

TNCC chief Selva Perunthagai

"Opportunities have been given to people who came to the party just a few days or a few years ago. And, no opportunity has been given to people from Gounder, an OBC community, and Arunthathiyars, a sub-sect of Dalits, in the western region. This has never happened in the past," she said.

TNCC chief Selva Perunthagai said he has already told Rahul Gandhi that he doesn't want to continue in the post after the 2026 elections.

The Congress high command on Friday released the names of 27 candidates for the April 23 election. The party renominated 12 sitting MLAs and denied tickets to five.

Of the 28 seats that the party is contesting in the DMK alliance, the Congress is yet to announce its candidate for Melur in Madurai district.

Notably, GKM Tamil Kumaran, son of senior PMK leader GK Mani owing allegiance to Dr S Ramadoss, has been fielded from Pennagaram in Dharmapuri district in the Vanniyar stronghold. Kumaran, a film producer, joined the party on March 28.

WEST ASIA CRISIS: Gujarat-bound vessel sanctioned by US diverted over payment issues

Iran oil tanker reroutes from India to China

AJITH ATHRADY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

A US-sanctioned Aframax tanker carrying Iranian crude oil has changed its declared destination mid-voyage from India to China, apparently due to payment-related difficulties.

The tanker Ping Shun, built in 2002 and sanctioned by the US in 2025, had initially signalled Gujarat's Vadinar as its destination. The tanker loaded approximately 6 lakh barrels of oil from Kharg Island around March 4 with an estimated time of arrival (ETA) at Vadinar of April 4.

According to ship-tracking firm Kpler, the vessel is now heading to Dongying in China.

There is no confirmation that the current AIS (Automatic Identification System) destination is final, as tankers can alter course at any time.

Had the shipment reached Vadinar, it would be India's first Iranian crude import since 2019.

MISSED CHANCE

- Indian refiners had been trying to buy Iranian oil on water following a recent 30-day US sanctions waiver
- Had the shipment reached Vadinar, it would be India's first Iranian crude import since 2019
- The rerouting is believed to stem from tightened payment terms

Indian refiners had been exploring opportunities to buy Iranian oil on water following a recent 30-day US sanctions waiver aimed at easing oil prices amid the US-Israeli conflict with Iran. The waiver expires on April 19.

The rerouting is believed to stem from tightened payment terms by sellers, who are shifting away from the previous 30-60 day credit window toward upfront or near-term settlement.

The actual buyer and seller of the cargo remain unclear.

Vadinar hosts a 20 million-tonnes-per-year refinery owned by Nayara Energy, backed by Russian oil giant Rosneft. India's oil ministry has stated that any decision to resume Iranian crude purchases will be driven by techno-commercial feasibility.

Prior to the sanction, India imported significant volumes of Iranian light and heavy grades of crude oil due to strong refinery compatibility and favourable commercial terms.

Imports from Iran stopped in May 2019 after US sanctions were tightened in 2018, with supplies replaced by West Asian, US and other grades. At its peak, Iranian oil accounted for 11.5% of India's total crude imports.

An estimated 95 million barrels of Iranian oil are currently on vessels at sea, of which around 51 million barrels could potentially be directed to India, while the rest are better suited for China and Southeast Asia.

However, payment challenges persist as Iran remains disconnected from the SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication) — a global messaging network used by banks, since March 2012, following European Union sanctions over its nuclear programme.

Previous Indian purchases from Iran were settled in euros through a Turkish bank intermediary, an option that is no longer available. The US waiver has allowed purchases of oil already at sea, but uncertainties around payment mechanisms continue to complicate deals.

Migrant labourers, who lost their jobs owing to LPG supply disruptions, rush to board a train to travel to their hometowns, in Ahmedabad on Friday. REUTERS

Centre asks states to check hoarding, black marketing

NEW DELHI, PTI: The Centre has directed states and Union Territories to take strict action against hoarding and black marketing of petroleum products and LPG amid supply concerns triggered by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Invoking provisions under the Essential Commodities Act and the LPG Control Order, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas asked states to intensify enforcement, conduct daily raids and inspections in coordination with oil marketing companies, and maintain strict vigilance against diversion and misinformation, according to an official statement.

States have also been instructed to institutionalise daily press briefings, set up control rooms and helplines, and actively counter fake news to reassure the public about fuel availability.

People wait in a queue to refill LPG cylinders in Mumbai on Friday. PTI

The move comes as the government steps up measures to ensure an uninterrupted supply of petrol, diesel and LPG across the country despite the ongoing geopolitical situation.

The government advised citizens "to avoid panic purchase of petrol and diesel as well as unnecessary booking of LPG," and cautioned against rumours, urging reliance on official sources. Consumers have also been asked to use digital modes for LPG bookings and avoid visiting distributors unless necessary.

People were encouraged to adopt alternate fuels such as PNG, induction and electric cooktops wherever feasible and to conserve energy in daily use.

Despite the "war situation," the government said it has accorded the highest priority to domestic LPG and piped natural gas, along with essential services such as hospitals and educational institutions.

States have been advised to expand PNG connections and ensure targeted LPG distribution. In a review meeting with state officials, the MoPNG reiterated that there is no disruption in LPG supply for migrant workers.

Surat textile hub hit hard as input costs rise; operational days cut

SURAT, PTI: Gujarat's textile hub in Surat has started feeling the pinch of rising input costs due to the ongoing West Asia conflict, with several units either curtailing their daily working hours or bringing down their active production days.

WAR SHOCKS

Some office-bearers claimed that the industry was currently facing losses of around Rs 100 crore every day.

Surat city is among India's largest centres for man-made fabric production.

The South Gujarat Textile Processors Association has decided to limit the operational days of units to five days a week instead of seven in a bid to manage rising costs, its president Jitendra Vaktania said.

"Due to rising costs of raw materials and coal, the textile processing industry in Surat and South Gujarat is facing a crisis," he said.

Production scaled down

Several units have also scaled down production cycles from 24 hours to 12 hours a day, impacting overall output, said Ashok Jirawala, president of the Federation of Gujarat Weavers' Welfare Association and vice-president of the Southern Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

"The situation has become challenging, with the industry incurring losses of around Rs 90-Rs 100 crore per day," he said.

The crisis has been compounded by a labour shortage, with industry estimates indicating a 35% shortfall. More than 2,000 migrant workers have left the city in recent weeks, Jirawala added.

The earlier shortage of cooking gas cylinders had triggered worker migration, further straining operations.

The cost of imported raw materials, including man-made fiber, has also surged by 30-35%, he noted.

Vaktania said the work has declined by 25-30% across weaving, processing and trading segments.

Wedding season to boost demand

Despite the current downturn, the upcoming wedding season is expected to boost demand and provide some relief to the sector, Vaktania noted.

"Prior to the international crisis, the industry produced nearly seven crore metres of fabric per day. However, the output has now dropped by almost half," said Champalal Bothra, national chairman of the Confederation of All India Traders.

Even after the conflict subsides and factors such as yarn prices and labour availability stabilise, the industry may take two to three months to recover, he said.

Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi recently held a review meeting with industry leaders in Surat and assured an adequate supply of 5 kg LPG cylinders for workers.

5 Indians among 12 injured by missile debris in Abu Dhabi

NEW DELHI, PTI: Five Indian nationals were among 12 people reportedly injured in Abu Dhabi on Friday by debris from an intercepted missile.

Local authorities said the people sustained minor to moderate injuries in the incident.

The incident caused minor to moderate injuries to five Indian and six Nepali nationals, the Abu Dhabi Media Office said on social media.

It said another Nepali citizen sustained a major injury. The incident occurred in the Ajban area of Abu Dhabi when debris fell following a "successful interception by air defence systems", it added.

There was no word from the Indian side on the incident. Since the conflict in West Asia began on February 28, eight Indian nationals have been killed and several others injured in the region.

Kin of war victim move HC, seek return of mortal remains

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS

The Bombay High Court will hear on April 6 a petition filed by a Mumbai-based family of a seafarer who died after a drone struck an oil tanker off the Oman coast amid the West Asia crisis.

The family is seeking the return of the mortal remains of the seaman, Dixit Solanki (33), who died in a suspected missile/drone attack that triggered an explosion in the engine room of MT MKD Vyom off the Gulf of Oman.

MKD Vyom, a tanker carrying gasoline, was hit around 5 nautical miles off the coast of Muscat Governorate on 1 March in the backdrop of the Israel-United States attack on Iran. The vessel departed Europe on February 8 and was heading to Ras Tanura in Saudi Arabia when it was attacked.

The petition, filed by Amratlal Solanki and his daughter Mitali Solanki, has sought directions to the Union government to expedite the repatriation of his remains, claiming a lack of clarity from the authorities.

EC slams deployment of 2k cops for TMC leaders' security

NEW DELHI, PTI: The Election Commission has taken "serious note" of over 2,100 police personnel in poll-bound West Bengal being deployed for the security of nearly 1,000 people linked directly or indirectly to the ruling Trinamool Congress and asked the police chief to review the arrangement, officials said on Friday.

The EC officials said that before the announcement of elections on March 15, the West Bengal government had deployed 2,185 police personnel to provide security to 832 people associated directly with the TMC and 144 others, including party supporters.

They said the poll authority has taken "serious note" of the "lapse" and has directed the director general of police to carry out a strict professional review in three days.

Court closes ED case against Hooda over land allotment

PANCHKULA, PTI: A special court in Panchkula on Friday discharged former Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda and the Associated Journals Limited in a money laundering case linked to re-allotment of a plot in Panchkula, after closing the Enforcement Directorate's case against them.

The order follows a ruling by the Punjab and Haryana High Court dated February 25, which set aside a 2021 order that had framed charges against Hooda and others in the case.

Special Judge under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, Rajeev Goyal, closed the ED's complaint, as Hooda and the Associated Journals Limited (AJL), the publisher of National Herald, had already been discharged in the main case pursued by the CBI, Hooda's counsel, S P S Parmar, said.

CBSE includes AI, skill development in new curriculum

NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has announced an overhaul of its curriculum framework, which includes compulsory language learning from the sixth standard and AI language.

Set to take effect from the 2026-27 academic year across more than 32,900 affiliated schools, the reforms are in line with the National Education Policy 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework 2023.

Ranging from language instruction, technology education, skill development and assessment design, the reforms represent one of the most significant restructuring of school education in recent years. A key reform is the introduction of a new three-language learning mandate, made compulsory from Class 6, alongside the introduction of skill-based subjects for students in Classes 9 and 10.

New interdisciplinary offerings include a subject titled 'Individual in Society'. CBSE said the framework would also incorporate vocational exposure at the secondary level, with the stated aim of reducing student dependence on private coaching institutes for competitive exam preparation.

Computational thinking and artificial intelligence will be introduced in Classes 3-8 beginning next year, with students receiving between 50 and 100 structured hours annually depending on their grade.

Learning WITH TIME

Language instruction, technology, skill development and assessment design are part of the new curriculum

AI will be introduced in Classes 3-8

Key reform is the introduction of a new three-language learning mandate

New curriculum will be effective from the 2026-27 academic year

New interdisciplinary offerings include a subject titled 'Individual in Society'

The programme will be delivered through activity-based methods, including puzzles, games, and projects, and will cover concepts such as logical reasoning, pattern recognition, and the ethical dimensions of technology use.

From 2027-28, AI will be incorporated into the secondary school curriculum, with board-level assessments in the subject expected by 2029, marking one of the largest AI education rollouts in the country.

The rollout will be in phases, with different components coming into effect across 2026-27 and subsequent years. The changes will affect teaching methods, learning materials and evaluation.

Navy gets third nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine

Enhances India's second-strike capability at sea

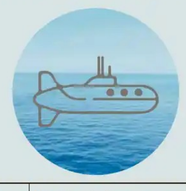
KALYAN RAY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

India on Friday commissioned its third nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN), INS Aridhaman. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh confirmed it in a cryptic social media post in X: "Shabd nahi Shakti hai, Aridhaman (no words, only prowess: Aridhman)."

This is the closest the Union government has come to acknowledging the induction of the 7,000-tonne SSBN — the third after INS Arihant in 2016 and INS Arighat in 2024. The SSBNs were designed and manufactured under the super-secretive Advanced Technology Vessel programme.

Underwater deterrence

INS Aridhaman becomes India's third indigenously built nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine



Improves second-strike capability amid evolving regional security challenges

Strengthens India's sea-based deterrence, completing air, land, and underwater nuclear capabilities

India joins a select group with SSBNs: US, Russia, UK, France, and China

Marks major progress in self-reliance and advanced naval technology

Armed with eight K4 submarine-launched ballistic missiles, each having a range of 3,500 km and carrying a nuclear warhead, INS Aridhaman is India's most potent platform with a high degree of indigenous content. Its induction allows India to keep at least one of the boomers on deterrent patrol at all times.

Last December, Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh Tripathi confirmed that the SSBN was in the final stages of trials and would be commissioned soon.

The induction is being seen as a major milestone to enhance the country's strategic strike capabilities.

India is among a select group of countries to have indigenously developed SSBNs; others include the US, Russia, the UK, France, and China.

While there is no official word on the commissioning venue, Singh and Admiral Tripathi, Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan, DRDO chief Samir Kamat, and other top officials were present at another commissioning ceremony at Visakhapatnam.

Once operational, the tunnel will significantly enhance India's shipbuilding ecosystem by enabling precise validation of hydrodynamic designs and propulsion systems for major naval platforms, including destroyers and aircraft carriers. It will also support the design and development of next-generation ships, submarines, and underwater platforms.

India has also begun building its first two SSNs — nuclear-powered attack submarines. The first SSN, sources said, would join the force by 2036, followed by the second one in 2038.

Meanwhile, China's PLA Navy, the world's largest maritime force, has prioritised modernising its submarine force as it currently operates six SSBNs, six SSNs, and 48 diesel-powered/air-independent-powered attack submarines. The PLAN's submarine force is expected to grow to 80 units by 2035.

Blaze at ONGC platform leaves 10 injured

MUMBAI, DHNS: At least 10 people sustained minor injuries after a fire broke out on an SHP platform in the Mumbai High oilfields off the Mumbai coast on Friday.

The Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) confirmed the incident. Officials said the fire was reported around 5:45 pm at ONGC's SHP platform in the Mumbai High asset.

The situation was promptly brought under control, they added. "Ten personnel sustained minor injuries and are under medical care. All are stable," officials said.

NCERT gets deemed-university tag

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has been granted deemed-university status, widening its mandate and bringing it under the ambit of the University Grants Commission (UGC).

The NCERT will now be able to design its own courses and award graduate and postgraduate degrees.

"The Ministry of Education, on the advice of the UGC, has declared NCERT, along with its six constituent units, as a deemed-to-be-university under a distinct category," an official notification issued Thursday stated.

Can be silenced, not defeated, says Chadha; AAP hits back

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

A day after the Aam Aadmi Party removed him as its deputy leader in Rajya Sabha and instructed that he not be allowed time from its quota, Raghav Chadha on Friday declared war against his party, saying he "can be silenced but not defeated".

His response drew an instant response from the party that he was engaging in "soft PR" but shies away from criticising ruling BJP.

Raghav Chadha

Once a close aide of Kejriwal, the Punjab MP warned his party that he is a "river that turns into a flood when the time comes" and questioned why his party finds him in the wrong for raising "real" issues that concern the public, which were often not raised in Parliament, and wants to silence his voice.

However, AAP did not take Chadha's 2.17-minute video posted on X kindly, with party Rajya Sabha floor leader Sanjay Singh leading the attack, claiming that it was "sad" to note Chadha did not raise his voice against the PM and on issues that concerned the country and party, including the attack on party workers in Gujarat.

Referring to the AAP writing to the Rajya Sabha Secretariat that he should not be allotted time for speaking from the party's quota, Chadha asked why the party wants to silence him.

Rajnath for future-ready maritime security

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh speaks at the commissioning ceremony of INS Taragiri in Visakhapatnam. PTI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday called for a need to move beyond the traditional perspective on maritime security of securing coastlines and ensure critical sea lanes, choke points, and digital infrastructure that are inextricably linked to national interests.

The minister was in Visakhapatnam to commission the newly developed stealth frigate, INS Taragiri, at the naval dockyard. Emphasising the need for a future-ready framework, Rajnath said in the digital era, a majority of the world's data travels through undersea internet cables, and any damage to them could disrupt global order.

"We must not limit ourselves to safeguarding our coastlines; we must also ensure the security of critical sea lanes, choke points, and digital infrastructure that are inextricably linked to our national interests. The Indian Navy is proactively engaged in all these security endeavours," the minister said.

"This approach prepares us for future challenges. Whenever India constructs and deploys advanced vessels such as INS Taragiri, it serves as a guarantee of peace and prosperity for the entire region," he added.

Highlighting the immense significance of the maritime domain in the evolving security landscape, Rajnath said the Indian Navy maintains a round-the-clock presence across the Indian Ocean region amidst the global uncertainties.

Talking about the navy's role in critical situations such as evacuation operations or humanitarian assistance, Singh said. "INS Taragiri will further augment the strength, values, and commitment of our Navy."

Taragiri can carry BrahMos and surface-to-air missiles.

Magisterial inquiry ordered into Ganderbal 'fake' encounter

Probe to be completed in seven days, with Home Department to get the report

ZULFIKAR MAJID
SRINAGAR, DHNS

A magisterial inquiry has been ordered into an alleged fake encounter in Central Jammu and Kashmir's Ganderbal district, with the authorities directing a time-bound probe into the killing of a local youth.

An official J&K Home Department communication on Thursday asked the Ganderbal district magistrate to conduct a "thorough and impartial" inquiry into the encounter at Arhama that resulted in the death of Raashid Ahmad Mughal, a resident of the district's Chuntwaliwar Lar village.

The order said the probe would "ascertain the facts and circumstances leading to the death", and mandated that it be completed within seven days, with the report to be submitted to the Home Department.

THE INCIDENT

- 'Encounter' took place during a joint Army-J&K Police operation
- Police said slain individual, Raashid Ahmad Mughal, was a militant
- Kin said he had no links to militancy

The "encounter" took place on Wednesday during a cordon-and-search operation launched jointly by the Army and the J&K Police following "specific inputs" about militant presence.

The police said the slain individual was a militant killed in an exchange of fire after security forces came under attack. However, his family contested the claim, alleging that Raashid was a civilian with no links to militancy and demanding a fair and transparent probe into the incident.

Officials said the magisterial inquiry would examine the sequence of events, including the intelligence inputs, conduct of the operation, and whether standard operating procedures were followed. Statements of security personnel, witnesses and family members are expected to be recorded, and forensic evidence examined.

The case has revived memories of controversial encounters in J&K that were followed by probes. In the Amshipora encounter, three civilians were killed and later identified as non-militants, prompting a police investigation and charges against Army personnel.

Similarly, the Pathribal encounter, which followed the Chittisinghpora massacre, triggered a prolonged investigation amid allegations that civilians were falsely labelled as militants.

Activist claims 'Godman' Kharat, Shinde exchanged 17 calls

MUMBAI, DHNS: In a sensational charge, social activist Anjali Damania on Friday alleged that Maharashtra's deputy chief minister and Shiv Sena chief leader Eknath Shinde and self-styled godman Ashok Kharat have exchanged 17 phone calls.

Shinde has not yet responded to the charges.

"There were 17 calls between Eknath Shinde and Ashok Kharat...of the 17 calls, 10 were incoming and seven were outgoing... the longest phone call lasted for 21 minutes," she said in Mumbai.

She also alleged that there are 117 calls between Kharat and NCP's Rupali Chakankar, who had to step down as chairperson of the Maharashtra State Women's Commission and the party's women's wing president.

Anjali made the statement based on the CDR, which has purportedly come out during the investigations into the case involving Ashok Kharat, an astrologer, numerologist, hypnotist, and cosmologist, who has been accused of sexual assault and extortion.

Anjali, however, has not yet specified during which timeframe these calls were made.

She alleged that the case reflects "political patronage" extended to the self-styled godman. With multiple high-profile names emerging from the call records, attention is now on the government's next course of action.

SC sets aside confiscation of assets linked to DMK MP

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

In a relief for DMK MP S Jagathrakshakan, the Supreme Court has set aside the confiscation of properties belonging to Accord Distilleries & Breweries Pvt Ltd and its directors, including the lawmaker, his son J Sundeep Anand and his daughter.

A bench of Justices comprising Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta referred to flaws in proceedings initiated under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) and allowed civil appeals filed by J Sri Nisha, the daughter of the MP, and others in its judgment delivered on April 1.

"We are of the opinion that the order of July 23, 2024, passed by the division bench of the high court, and so also the order of the single judge of the high court of November 30, 2023, rejecting the writ petition preferred by the appellants," the bench said.

As a consequence, the final order of August 26, 2024, passed by the adjudicating authority imposing a penalty and ordering confiscation of the property held by appellants, was declared to be arbitrary and contrary to law, the bench added.

The court found that the adjudicating authority undid the order of the competent authority even while the appeal against that order was pending.

"Such a course of action, in the opinion of this court, is tantamount to abdicating the powers of the appellate authority, even when the order of the competent authority was still under challenge in appeal at the instance of the department," the bench of justices said.

The bench noted that the high court repeatedly referred to the effect of the seizure order passed by the authorised officer under Section 37A of FEMA and the scope of consideration thereof by the adjudicating authority while passing the final order under Section 16.

Four arrested, blast plot foiled as ISI module busted in UP

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

The Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) has busted a module of Pakistan's spy agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and nabbed four suspected operatives from Lucknow.

They were allegedly planning to trigger blasts near Lucknow Railway Station and nearby places.

According to sources, the four suspects — identified as Saquib alias David, and Arbab, both residents of Meerut, and Vikas Gehlawat and Lokesh, residents of Gautam Budh Nagar — were arrested on Thursday.

A senior police official said here on Friday that the module allegedly planned to create terror by triggering blasts at railway signal boxes, crowded places, vehicles laden with gas cylinders, and at the premises of reputed organisations.

"Their first target was the Lucknow Railway Station," said the official.

Director General of Police (Law and Order) Amitabh Yash said that Saquib, who worked as a barber, was the head of the gang, and that he was in touch with his Pakistani handlers through social media platforms like Telegram and Instagram.

Lured in using money

The DGP added that Arbab was also active in the network, and that Saquib and Arbab lured Vikas and Lokesh by promising them money.

He said that the ATS had inputs about their activities, and was able to trace them and nab all four.

A can filled with chemicals, seven cellphones, some pamphlets, and Aadhaar Cards were recovered from their possession. Sources said that the sleuths were examining the content of their phones.

MISCELLANY

◆ COMICS ◆

Blondie

Hagar The Horrible

Beetle Bailey

Peanuts

KICK ME THE OL' PIGSKIN, SIR!
I HATE TO DISILLUSION YOU, MARCIE...
THIS BALL ISN'T MADE OUT OF PIGSKIN... IT'S PLASTIC..
KICK ME THE OL' PLASTIC, SIR!

Marvin

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

FNYIT

ODRPU

SESWEA

RBRUEG

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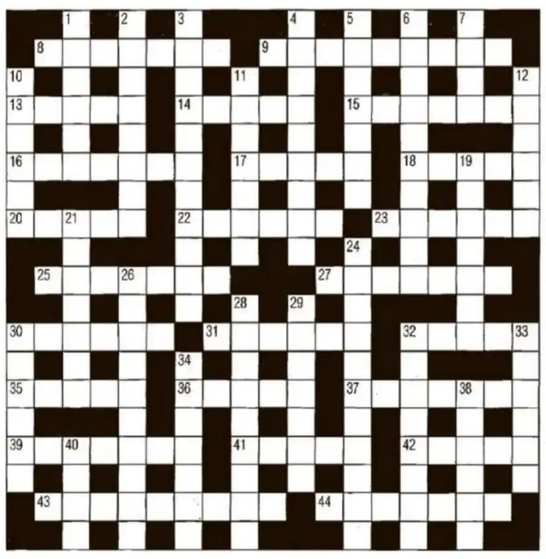
Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: _____ (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: OZONE QUIRK FRIGHT BUNDLE
Answer: The colorful carp that hid behind the rock in the garden pool was — BEING "KOI"

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 4034



CRYPTIC

ACROSS

8 Bearing the burden one couldn't bear (7)
9 Soup kitchen? (9)
13 Teach the followers (5)
14 Keep talking of how there's a great demand for? (3,2)
15 What the farmer has as an alternative to land (7)
16 Promise to give a hand to (7)
17 A predecessor of yours (5)
18 Being as I am (5)
20 The bird with the long tail in the swaying tree (5)
22 About a litre more of spirit (6)
23 What made the lady seem all behind and be so busy? (6)
25 Funny drawing of a box with a duck in it (7)
27 The head? All wrong. It's part of the knee (7)
30 Big shots in the film business (6)
31 Find the Princess has gout (3,3)
32 See a tot inside playing a game (5)
35 Lacking experience about and knowledge about (5)
36 Over the top - that's clear (5)
37 Make Leo Benn Sir Leo Benn? (7)
39 Attacks when one throws the switch (5,2)
41 Back in bed holding a medicine bottle (5)
42 Like the heavy curtains, looking rather old (5)
43 Mention to about being unpunctual (3,2,4)
44 Laugh when the singer goes off key in it (7)

DOWN

1 In a well-heated pub in Australia (6)
2 And the porter carrying it will be conspicuous (5,3)
3 What made the curls in the hair tight? (4,7)
4 Don't sit doing nothing! (5,4)
5 Someone shooing the animals so they disperse (7)
6 Alice's home? (5,5)
7 The silly fool got told off (4)
10 The building is not getting any worse (6)
11 Stocked by the shop now or yet to come (2,5)
12 A coin and a note from a foreign country (6)
19 An officer has, below him, many a sailor (7)
21 Make paper money! (7)
24 A lot of people get shot fighting in it (6,5)
26 In which gifts are on display (6,4)
28 Get up late (9)
29 Happy? Not terribly, though in the money (7)
30 Sees and quotes aloud (6)
32 What made Daddy so tall? (4,4)
33 About to have a party, tax yourself unduly (6)
34 Firm and stern, gathering up the instruments (7)
38 The girl has the little brother carrying the flag (6)
40 A bird seeking a mate? (4)

ACROSS

8 King Arthur's castle (7)
9 Hidden from the eye (9)
13 Robbery (5)
14 Farewell (5)
15 Flourish of trumpets (7)
16 Cookie (7)
17 Level of quality (5)
18 Bring upon oneself (5)
20 Plenty (5)
22 Root vegetable (6)
23 Mildly alcoholic drink (6)
25 Make merry (7)
27 Full of high spirits (7)
30 Fruit (6)
31 Fish (6)
32 Lovers' meeting (5)
35 Number of concubines (5)
36 Chopped meat (5)
37 Lasting forever (7)
39 Feeler (7)
41 Fixed amount of work (5)
42 Bent forward (5)
43 Light silvery element (9)
44 Opposite (7)

DOWN

1 Loses self-control (6)
2 Glass container (4,4)
3 Sentimental attitudes (11)
4 Container kept at constant temperature (9)
5 Scatter (7)
6 Wickedly (10)
7 Mediterranean island (4)
10 Fear (6)
11 Claws (7)
12 Be treacherous (6)
19 Ten decades (7)
21 Diary (7)
24 Secret (11)
26 Just for show (10)
28 Metallic element (9)
29 Memory loss (7)
30 Execute (6)
32 Shivers (8)
33 Spanish city (6)
34 Ambassador's residence (7)
38 Fairly recent (6)
40 Norse god (4)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 12387

CRYPTIC

ACROSS: 1, Score 6, V-Ali-d 9, Agonies 10, Craig 11, Giles 12, Tonga 13, Venison 15, A-LL 17, Eton 18, Relish 19, Venus 20, Cabled 22, Less 24, He-y 25, Can-as-ta 26, I-deal 27, BAs-RA 28, F-illy 29, Onerous 30, Me-an-t 31, G-host
DOWN: 2, Car-pet 3, Ra-is-in 4, E.g.-G 5, An-to-n 6, Veggies 7, Asia 8, Ideals 12, To-W-ed 13, Vet-Ch. 14, Nobby 15, A-I'd-es 16, L-has-a 18, Rural 19, V-erdant 21, Aerate 22, Lavish 23, Stalls 25, Car-Ry. 26, I-Ron 28, Fug

EASY

ACROSS: 1, Epoch 6, Table 9, Auditor 10, Blast 11, Pilot 12, Rapid 13, Parasol 15, Few 17, Oral 18, Parade 19, Revel 20, Clever 22, Lead 24, Had 25, Broadly 26, Drill 27, Folio 28, Idiom 29, Consume 30, Brief 31, Pride
DOWN: 2, Pillar 3, Casual 4, Hut 5, Vital 6, Topical 7, Arid 8, Looted 12, Rower 13, Pouch 14, Rated 15, Faded 16, Weedy 18, Pearl 19, Reproof 21, Labour 22, Ladder 23, Almond 25, Bliss 26, Dice 28, Imp

◆SU-DO-KU-6871◆

			4	9		3		1
		7	6			4		
					2		6	5
			5		4			
1	7						4	6
			9		1			
3	8		1					
		4			6	9		
7		5		2	8			

medium

SOLUTION TO 6870

5	3	8	4	2	9	6	7	1
4	6	7	1	5	8	3	2	9
9	1	2	3	6	7	4	5	8
1	4	9	6	8	2	5	3	7
7	8	6	5	4	3	1	9	2
2	5	3	7	9	1	8	6	4
3	2	4	9	1	5	7	8	6
8	7	1	2	3	6	9	4	5
6	9	5	8	7	4	2	1	3

To solve the puzzle: To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

SCRABBLE™

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E1	X8	E1	A1	A1	S1	Z10	1st Letter Triple	RACK 1
L1	S1	L1	A1	O1	P3	C3		RACK 2
C3	E1	A1	A1	D2	C3	S1	4th Letter Triple	RACK 3
N1	E1	Y4	N1	R1	T1	O1	Double Word Score	RACK 4

PAR SCORE 120-130
by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

W4 I1 T1 N1 E1 S1 S1	RACK 1	70
B3 L1 A1 D2 I1 N1 G2	RACK 2	61
E1 A1 R1 L1 O1 B3 E1	RACK 3	77
P3 A1 T1 T1 E1 R1 N1	RACK 4	59
PAR SCORE 175-185	JUDD'S TOTAL	267

HITORI-3325

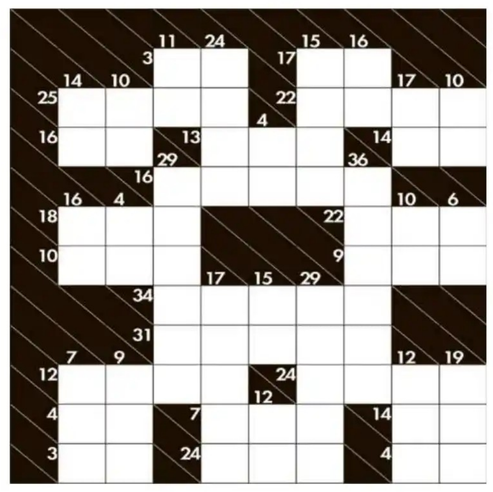
4	2	7	1	2	8	5	3
3	6	6	1	7	4	1	8
5	4	8	6	2	6	7	5
4	5	2	8	4	5	6	7
5	1	5	5	4	5	2	6
8	5	3	2	6	1	5	4
2	8	5	4	3	5	4	5
6	8	4	7	5	3	8	1

SOLUTION TO 3324

3	■	5	8	■	1	6	4
5	7	■	4	2	8	3	■
■	8	4	2	■	7	■	1
2	3	■	7	6	4	5	8
8	■	2	1	4	■	7	■
■	2	8	■	3	5	1	6
1	4	3	6	■	2	■	7
4	■	7	■	5	6	8	2

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

KAKURO- 3325



SOLUTION TO 3324

To solve the puzzle: Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

SU DO KU X - 3875

3			4			7		■
	■						■	
9		■				5	3	
		9	■		■	6		8
		6	5	■				1
			1		■		9	
2		■	8			■		
	3	4	7			■		9
■	8	5					■	

SOLUTION TO 3874

7	5	4	8	9	3	2	1	6
6	8	3	2	1	4	9	5	7
1	9	2	6	5	7	8	3	4
4	7	5	3	8	2	1	6	9
3	2	1	9	4	6	5	7	8
8	6	9	1	7	5	3	4	2
5	1	7	4	2	9	6	8	3
2	3	8	7	6	1	4	9	5
9	4	6	5	3	8	7	2	1

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

West Asia crisis: Pressure mounts on US administration to find a quick resolution

US can take Strait with more time, says Trump

REUTERS

President Donald Trump on Friday said the US can open the Strait of Hormuz with a little more time, as pressure mounts on his administration to find a quick resolution to a war against Iran.

"With a little more time, we can easily OPEN THE HORMUZ STRAIT, TAKE THE OIL,& MAKE A FORTUNE," Trump said in a post on Truth Social.

Donald Trump

Nearly five weeks after it started with a joint US-Israeli aerial assault, the war in Iran continues to spread chaos across the region and roil financial markets, raising the pressure on Trump to find a quick resolution to the conflict.

Iran has effectively shut down the Strait of Hormuz , a key waterway that carries about a fifth of the world's total oil consumption, in retaliation for US-Israeli strikes that began in late February. Reopening it has become a priority for governments around the world as energy prices soar.

In the speech on Wednesday night, Trump repeated his threats against Iran's civilian power plants and gave no clear timeline for ending hostilities, drawing vows of retaliation from Iran and depressing share prices.

UNSC to vote on resolution today

The UN Security Council will vote on a draft resolution proposed by Bahrain Saturday on reopening the Strait of Hormuz, even as permanent members China and Russia voiced opposition to earlier versions of the text that would have allowed use of force by countries, reports PTI.
The draft Security Council resolution affirms that the Strait of Hormuz is open for all transit passage. No state has the right to close or control it. It authorises States to take "exclusively defensive measures" to secure transit passage.

A media representative walks past a heavily damaged building following a strike at the Azadi Sport Complex in Tehran on Friday. AFP

White House seeks $1.5 tn defence budget as Iran war drives up costs

WASHINGTON, AFP

US President Donald Trump asked lawmakers on Friday to approve a massive $1.5 trillion defence budget for 2027, as the United States faces rising costs from its war with Iran and mounting global security commitments.

The proposal would lift Pentagon spending by more than 40% in a single year -- the sharpest increase since World War II -- as Washington seeks to sustain military operations and rebuild depleted weapons stockpiles.

The request highlights the growing financial pressure of a conflict now in its fifth week, and sets up a political battle in Congress over how to fund a dramatic expansion of military spending.

US media citing closed-door congressional briefings, have reported that the Iran war could be costing as much as $2 billion per day, underscoring the scale of the burden even before longer-term reconstruction and resupply costs are factored in.

To offset part of the increase, the administration is proposing around $73 billion in cuts to non-defense spending -- roughly 10% -- targeting a range of domestic programs including environmental initiatives, housing assistance and education funding.

White House officials say the reductions would eliminate what they describe as wasteful spending and shift some responsibilities back to state and local governments.

Trump has framed the defence increase in urgent terms, arguing that military investment must take precedence during wartime.

"It's not possible for us to take care of day care, Medicaid, Medicare," Trump said at a recent private event, adding that such responsibilities could be handled at the state level while Washington focuses on "military protection."

The budget outline, released in summary form, is not binding but serves as a statement of the administration's priorities as Congress begins drafting spending legislation. Lawmakers retain the power to rewrite or reject the plan.

Japanese, French and Omani vessels cross Hormuz

▸ Three Omani-operated tankers, a French-owned container ship and a Japanese-owned gas carrier have crossed the Strait of Hormuz since Thursday, shipping data showed, reflecting Iran's policy to allow passage for vessels it deems friendly, reports Reuters.
Iran initially shut the Strait - a route for about a fifth of global oil and LNG flows - after US and Israeli airstrikes on Iran. Later, it said it would permit transits by ships with no US or Israeli links.

US-Iran truce talks have stalled: WSJ

▸ Current mediation efforts led by regional countries, including Pakistan, to broker a cease-fire between the United States and Iran have reached a dead end, The Wall Street Journal reported on Friday, reports Reuters.
Iran has officially told mediators that it is unwilling to meet US officials in Islamabad in the coming days and considers US demands unacceptable, the report said.
Reuters could not immediately verify the report.

Hegseth fires top US army general in new shake-up

Army's vice chief of staff General Christopher LaNeve to take over

WASHINGTON, AFP

The Trump administration has fired army chief of staff General Randy George and two other senior figures, officials said Friday, in a surprise shake-up just as US forces are locked in a major war against Iran.

Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth's ouster of George, the top US Army general, meant the latest in a series of high-profile departures from the military since President Donald Trump returned to power a year ago.

There was little in the way of a public explanation for sacking George, a highly decorated veteran who oversaw the army at a time when the United States is more than a month into a punishing bombing campaign against Iran.

US Army Chief of Staff General Randy George (L) and US Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth. AFP FILE

Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell posted a statement on X late Thursday that George "will be retiring from his position... effective immediately."

During a nearly four-decade military career, George deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan multiple times and also served in positions including vice chief of staff of the army and senior military assistant to then-defense secretary Lloyd Austin during Joe Biden's term as president.

The army's vice chief of staff General Christopher LaNeve will take over as acting chief of staff, CBS reported.

Hegseth previously said LaNeve is "a battle-tested leader with decades of operational experience."

An official also confirmed that General David Hodne and Major General William Green Jr. were removed alongside George.

Hodne led the Army's Transformation and Training Command while Green was in charge of the Army's Chaplain Corps.

10 dead as Russia launches new daytime attacks on Ukraine

KYIV, AFP: Russian strikes killed at least 10 people in Ukraine on Friday, officials said, as Moscow launched the latest in an increasing number of daytime barrages.

Moscow has been firing aerial broadsides at Ukraine throughout its more than four-year invasion, mostly at night, but in recent weeks it has stepped up daytime attacks.

The Russian military used more than 500 drones and dozens of missiles in its salvo on Friday, according to the Ukrainian air force.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky accused Russia of intensifying attacks ahead of Catholic Easter on Sunday, "turning what should have been silence in the skies into an Easter escalation".

Images from Ukrainian emergency services showed damaged residential buildings, with a block of flats ripped open and rubble strewn on a street.

The attack killed one person and left eight wounded in the capital region of Kyiv, said regional governor Mykola Kalashnyk.

China cracks down on digital humans, misleading content

BEIJING, REUTERS

China's cyberspace regulator issued draft regulations on Friday to oversee the development online of digital humans, requiring clear labelling and banning services that could mislead children or fuel addiction.

The Cyberspace Administration of China's proposed rules would require prominent "digital human" labels on all virtual human content and prohibit digital humans from providing "virtual intimate relationships" to those under 18, according to rules published for public comment until May 6. The draft regulations would also ban the use of other people's personal information to create digital humans without consent, or using virtual humans to bypass identity verification systems, reflecting Beijing's efforts to maintain control in the face of advances in artificial intelligence.

Digital humans are also prohibited from disseminating content that endangers national security, inciting subversion of state power, promoting secession or undermining national unity, the draft rules said. Service providers are advised to prevent and resist content that is sexually suggestive, depicts horror, cruelty or incites discrimination based on ethnicity or region, according to the document. Providers are also encouraged to take necessary measures to intervene and provide professional assistance when users exhibit suicidal or self-harming tendencies. China made clear its ambitions to aggressively adopt AI throughout its economy in the new five-year policy blueprint issued last month. The push comes alongside tightening governance in the booming industry to ensure safety and alignment with the country's socialist values.

The new rules aim to fill a gap in governance in the digital human sector, setting clear red lines for the healthy development of the industry, according to an analysis published on the cyberspace regulator's website.

"The governance of digital virtual humans is no longer merely an issue of industry norms; rather, it has become a strategic scientific problem that concerns the security of the cyberspace and public interests," it added.

KARNATAKA SILK INDUSTRIES CORPORATION LTD
(A Government of Karnataka Enterprise)
3rd & 4th Floors, Public Utility Building, M.G. Road, Bengaluru – 560 001.
Ph: 080- 25586550/25586402 Email: info@ksicsilk.com

No: KSIC/PR/WORKS/2026-27 **Date: 31.03.2026**

NOTIFICATION (Through KPP Portal only)

Tenders are invited through KPP Portal from Contractors for the below detailed works:

Sl. No.	Particulars	EMD (in Rs.)	Pre-bid meeting Date	Last date for uploading Tender	Technical Bids Opening Date
1.	**Re-Tender** for Supply, Installation and Commissioning of 01 No. Sludge Dewatering Machine for KSIC, SWF, Mysuru.	**21,000/-**	-	17.04.2026 by 03.00 p.m.	18.04.2026 @ 03.30 p.m.
2.	**Re-Tender** for Replacing of Aeration Pipe Lines, Water Lines, Suction Pipe Lines and Railings in CETP & Supply, Installation of 4 Nos Magnetic Inflow Meter for CETP at SWG, Mysuru Unit - I.	**13,000/-**	-	17.04.2026 by 03.00 p.m.	18.04.2026 @ 03.30 p.m.
3.	**Re-Tender** for Entrusting Work towards Re-Routing of Soft Water Line From Softener Unit to Dyeing, Soaking And VHS Sections at SWF, Mysuru Unit.	**12,000/-**	-	17.04.2026 by 03.00 p.m.	18.04.2026 @ 03.30 p.m.
4.	**Tender** for Liaisoning and Transportation of 153 MT's per month 'C' Grade Steam Coal from mines of M/s. Singareni Collieries Company Limited, Hyderabad to KSIC unit at S.F, T. Narasipura and SWF, Mysuru for a period of one year.	**28,000/-**	10.04.2026 by 11.00 a.m.	21.04.2026 by 03.00 p.m.	22.04.2026 @ 03.30 p.m.

Tender documents, details of the Notification, schedule, terms & conditions can be downloaded from website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in. Further details can be had from office of the Undersigned during working hours or KPP Portal help desk - 080-46010000 /080-68948777.

Sd/-
GENERAL MANAGER (Pro)

DIPR/CP/6391/MAA/2025-26

Government of Karnataka - Water Resources Department
Bhadra Command Area Development Authority
Engineering Division, Malavagoppa,
Nidhige Post Office, Shivamogga – 577222
No. BCADAS/ED/Tech Sect/Tender/26-27/01 D: 01/04/2026

Short-Term Tender Notice (IFT-01/2026-27)

Head of Account: 2705-115

On behalf of the Administrators, Bhadra CADA, Shivamogga, the Executive Engineer, Engineering Division, Bhadra Command Area Development Authority, Malavagoppa, Shivamogga – 577222, invites tenders for the year 2026-27 (from 01.04.2026 to 31.03.2027) for the temporary recruitment of staff from a Manpower Institute for certain vacant posts in the offices of the Administrator, Bhadra CADA, Shivamogga; Executive Engineer, Engineering Division, Bhadra CADA, Shivamogga; Assistant Executive Engineer, Engineering Sub-Division, Bhadra CADA, Shivamogga/Siddapura; Agriculture and Co-operation Sub-Divisions of Bhadra CADA, Shivamogga; and the Chairman's Personal Branch /Offices. A detailed competitive short-term tender is invited in a two-cover system through the KPP Portal www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in.

Details are as follows: 1. Date from which tenders can be accessed on KPP Portal: From 01.04.2026 up to 10.04.2026 **2.** Last date for submission of filled bids: 10.04.2026 at 04.30 PM **3.** Date of opening of technical bid (two-cover system): 13.04.2026 at 05.00 PM **4.** Date of opening of financial bid: 15.04.2026 at 05.15 PM

Further information may be obtained from the office of the Engineering Division, Bhadra CADA, Shivamogga, during office hours or from the website www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Engineering Division
Bhadra CADA, Shivamogga

DIPR/smg/ksmca/26-27/02/04/17

China investigates former Xinjiang chief for graft

BEIJING, PTI: The ruling Communist Party of China's former Xinjiang chief, who is also a member of the influential Politburo, is under investigation over suspected violations of discipline and law, the latest senior official to face scrutiny by the anti-corruption watchdog.

Ma Xingrui has been placed under disciplinary and supervisory investigation, an official statement said on Friday.

Ma, also deputy head of the Leading Group for Rural Affairs of the CPC, is being investigated by the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, an anti-corruption watchdog, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. He is part of the 24-member Politburo, a top decision-making body of the party headed by President Xi Jinping.

WORLD AT A GLANCE

This screen grab from Nasa's feed released on Friday, shows the Artemis II crew members as they head to orbit the Moon for the first time in more than half a century. AFP

Myanmar junta chief elected president by pro-military Parl

▸ Myanmar's parliament elected junta chief Min Aung Hlaing as president on Friday, parliament said, with the ex-military commander set to maintain his rule in a civilian guise after snatching power by force five years ago, reports AFP from Naypyidaw.

The coup-leading general -- who swept aside democracy in 2021, detaining elected figurehead Aung San Suu Kyi and dissolving her party -- was anointed by pro-military MPs installed in a recent election overseen by the junta he leads.

The vote on Friday across the upper and lower houses of parliament in the capital Naypyidaw saw Min Aung Hlaing secure a huge margin over the second-place candidate in a three-person race.

Min Aung Hlaing.

"We hereby announce Senior General Min Aung Hlaing as president," parliament speaker Aung Lin Dwe announced from a stage in the parliament meeting hall. He received 429 votes of 584 cast by MPs, a parliament official said after ballot counting was finished.

Chinese man held in crypto scam

▸ A Chinese national has been arrested in connection with his alleged involvement in cheating people through operating a multi-million rupees crypto currency scam, police said on Friday, reports PTI from Kathmandu.

A team of police arrested Zhu Yi-eng, 35, from the capital's Thamel area on Thursday along with transaction details of crypto currency worth Nepalese rupees (NRs) 179.97 million, said Pavan Kumar Bhattarai, spokesperson at Kathmandu District Police Circle.

The police also recovered from him three mobile sets and various documents, including papers used to carry out illegal transactions.

During preliminary investigation, it was found that Zhu was involved in cheating local Nepalese by contacting them through social media platforms and winning their confidence by showing various attractive offers.

Parishioners participate in the 'Way of the Cross' procession over the Brooklyn Bridge on Good Friday in New York City. REUTERS

Pak to repay $2-bn loan to UAE

▸ Pakistan has decided to repay a loan of USD 2 billion to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on its demand, a media report said on Friday, reports PTI from Islamabad.

The UAE had provided the fund to support the balance of payment, and it was being rolled out until recently.

The UAE recently asked for the immediate return of the funds in the wake of the recent situation in the Middle East following the US-Israel war on Iran, sources said.

Citing sources, Geo News reported that the amount was kept with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) as a safe deposit.

Pakistan will return USD 2 billion to Abu Dhabi by the end of this month, it added.

8 killed in Afghanistan quake

▸ An earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 5.8 rattled parts of northern and eastern Afghanistan and western Pakistan late Friday. The spokesperson for Kabul's governor said at least eight people are dead, reports AP from Kabul.

The region is highly seismically active, and quakes have caused thousands of deaths in recent years. Friday's earthquake had an epicentre in the Hindu Kush mountain range, about 150 kilometres (93 miles) east of the Afghan city of Kunduz.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and his daughter, Kim Ju Ae, inspect a musical instrument store ahead of the opening of the fourth-stage district of the Hwasong area in Pyongyang. AFP

Jan Vishwas Bill: Govt may review 5 cr minor offence cases, says Goyal

12 states have already introduced own version of laws

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

A day after the passage of the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, in Parliament, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday said the government would review nearly 5 crore pending cases relating to minor offences.

Talking to reporters, Goyal said more than 1,000 minor offences across 79 Acts have been decriminalised through the Jan Vishwas Bill. For the cases, which are pending in the courts, the minister said, prosecutors could approach courts to close such cases in light of the new provisions.

"There are 5 crore pending court cases relating to such minor offences, majority of which should never have gone to court, never have made a person a criminal offender as is done today," he said.

"We hope that these can all, also be, resolved by the prosecutors by asking the court to just close them on the basis of the new provisions so that a big relief can be given to past cases also, to the future also, and a sense of relief and a sense of confidence or trust will be generated across the country," he added.

The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, which has been passed by both Houses of Parliament, seeks to rationalise more than 1,000 offences by removing minor offences, thereby improving the overall regulatory environment and enabling a more conducive ecosystem for businesses and citizens alike.

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal speaks on Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, on Friday. PTI

Easing the Burden

- The Bill reflects the government's commitment to fostering a trust-based governance framework and ensuring proportionate regulation
- It seeks to reduce the compliance burden on individuals and businesses by decriminalising minor offences and rationalising existing legal provisions
- As per its provisions, **784** provisions across **79** Central Acts administered by **23** Ministries have been amended
- Of these, **717** provisions have been decriminalised to promote Ease of Doing Business, while **67** provisions have been amended to facilitate Ease of Living

As per the provisions of the Bill, 784 provisions across 79 central acts administered by 23 ministries have been amended. Of these, 717 provisions have been decriminalised to promote Ease of Doing Business, while 67 provisions have been amended to facilitate Ease of Living.

Goyal informed that 12 states have already introduced their own version of Jan Vishwas laws and urged other states to also look into decriminalising petty offences.

The minister added that the Centre remains open to suggestions and is willing to review additional Central laws as part of the broader effort to simplify the regulatory framework and reduce litigation.

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) said the new regulation is a landmark step in India's regulatory reform agenda.

The Bill introduces meaningful structural improvements: replacing imprisonment provisions for minor infractions with proportionate monetary penalties or warnings; graded enforcement mechanisms that extend leniency to first-time contraventions; and rationalisation of fines in line with the severity of offences, said CII Director General Chandrajit Banerjee.

"Together, these measures will substantially ease the compliance burden on businesses, accelerate dispute resolution, and reduce the caseload on an already stretched judicial system," he said.

'AI-led ops can help reclaim 850 hrs per IT person a year'

Cisco says AI leading driver for wireless ROI, source of challenges

UMA KANNAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

Artificial Intelligence (AI) simplifies operations and can free up over 850 hours per IT person annually, said Cisco in its inaugural State of Wireless Report.

Cisco surveyed 6,098 wireless professionals from across the world, who agreed that AI simplifies operations, shifting teams from reactive 'ticket cycles' to high-value strategic initiatives, but simultaneously, AI is challenging their infrastructure as the top security threat, and the biggest talent risk.

It also revealed that Wi-Fi has evolved into a strategic growth engine capable of delivering a multiplier effect, and as organisations reach an inflection point in connectivity demand, those who prioritise wireless, strategically are achieving significantly higher business value than their peers.

When organisations prioritise wireless strategically, they achieve returns that compound across the enterprise, the report said.

This inaugural Cisco report explores the global state and future trends of wireless enterprise networking, revealing a 'wireless AI paradox' with AI as both the leading driver for wireless return on investment (ROI) and the primary source of escalating challenges.

It pointed out that AI-generated attacks are the leading driver of increased wireless security risk. Over half of organisations (58%) have experienced financial losses from wireless security incidents, with 40% of them exceeding $1 million annually.

Wireless professionals are specialised IT and engineering experts, who design, implement, and maintain the infrastructure for wireless communication.

About India, the report stated that organisations in India deploying AI workloads recognise wireless criticality differently from others. Among global wireless leaders in organisations deploying AI workloads, 56% view wireless as strategically critical compared to 46% of non-deployers.

"While AI is seen as the path to simplify wireless operations and resolve complexity issues, AI-generated or automated cyberattacks are the top driver of increased wireless security threats and the domain most-likely to attract talent away from wireless in India," the report added.

It also pointed out talent shortages as one of the barriers. Talent shortages do not merely slow modernisation; they directly amplify operational strain and security exposure, while making it more difficult to implement AIOps. "This contributes to a vicious cycle: organisations lacking talent are slower to modernise, complexity and security risk escalate, costs rise, and the best talent leaves for more modern organisations," it stated.

Sarvam AI raises funds at $1.5 billion valuation

BLOOMBERG

Homegrown artificial intelligence startup, Sarvam AI, is close to raising $300 million to $350 million, as it seeks to build a domestic player that can compete with leaders from the US and China.

The Bengaluru-based company is raising the money at a valuation of $1.5 billion to $1.55 billion and could close the round as soon as next week, according to people familiar with the matter, asking not to be named because the discussions are not yet public. Bessemer Venture Partners is expected to lead the round, with Nvidia Corp, Amazon.com Inc and Prosperity7 Ventures also participating, the sources said.

Sarvam took a starring role at the India AI Impact Summit 2026, held in February in New Delhi, unveiling an AI model that is tailored to the languages and cultures of the world's biggest market. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government have made a forceful case that countries beyond the US and China need to control their own destiny with the emerging technology.

The Sarvam booth at the India AI Impact Summit 2026 in New Delhi. BLOOMBERG

Sarvam was founded by two AI researchers, Vivek Raghavan and Pratyush Kumar, in 2023.

Sarvam's models are built to be used through voice commands and are accessible through 22 Indian languages, which the company has said will be a competitive advantage in the country of 1.45 billion, where the vast majority cannot read, write or type in English. The goal is to take on the likes of OpenAI and Alphabet Inc, whose models often struggle with Indian languages.

Sarvam also offers what's known as agentic AI models that can carry out tasks like coding or meeting planning in large part autonomously and with minimal human intervention. The company says its agents could drive enterprise automation in one of the world's fastest growing economies.

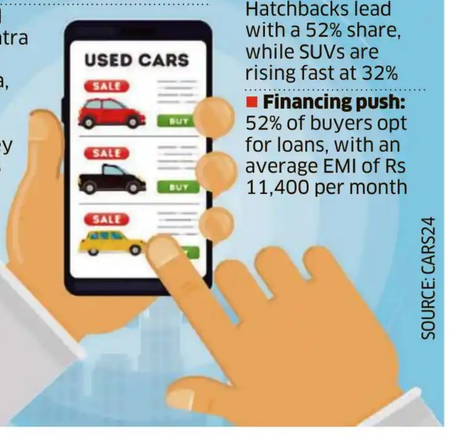
"Today we show we can bring our own AI to a billion Indians," Sarvam Co-founder Kumar said in February at the unveiling.

Smarter First Move

Gears of Growth 2025: Indian Used Car Market Report, released by Cars24 in collaboration with Team-BHP, offers a comprehensive view of how India's used car ownership journey is evolving.

Key highlights:

- **Market maturity:** Demand is now steady year-round, signalling that pre-owned cars are increasingly a first-choice purchase
- **AI-led decisions:** Rising search trends show buyers using AI to compare, evaluate, and transact
- **Shift beyond NCR:** Maharashtra leads demand, with Karnataka, Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh emerging as key growth drivers
- **Tier-2 surge:** Non-metros account for 62% of demand, driven by first-time buyers and affordability
- **Segment trends:** Hatchbacks lead with a 52% share, while SUVs are rising fast at 32%
- **Financing push:** 52% of buyers opt for loans, with an average EMI of Rs 11,400 per month



Maruti Suzuki eyes 8k service touchpoints by FY31: MD

NEW DELHI, PTI: Maruti Suzuki India Ltd (MSIL) is aiming to scale up its service network to around 8,000 touchpoints by FY2030-31, its MD and CEO Hisashi Takeuchi said on Friday. The company added 502 new touchpoints in FY2025-26, MSIL said.

Hisashi Takeuchi

"As our customers are spread across the nation and their requirements continue to evolve, we are continuously expanding our service touchpoints... Currently, we have 5,926 touchpoints, and we aim to expand this network to around 8,000 touchpoints by FY2030-31," Takeuchi said.

Noting that for a car customer, nothing gives more comfort than knowing that they can easily find a service touchpoint and spare parts whenever and wherever they need them, he said the company's service touchpoint is always within reach.

Customers can visit a workshop, opt for doorstep service, get their vehicle serviced at locations they frequent, or seek support during a road trip, he said.

MSIL said its newly-added service touchpoints in FY26 comprise a mix of formats, including ARENA and NEXA workshops, Maruti Suzuki Sales and Service Points (MSSSP), service-on-wheels and bodyshop-on-wheels.

Human roles will shift, not disappear: Gartner

BENGALURU, DHNS: Over half of all enterprises will stop paying for assistive intelligence, such as copilots and smart advisors by 2028, and instead will favour platforms that commit to workflow results, according to business and technology insights company Gartner.

It stated that the first disruption will affect approval-heavy, timing-sensitive workflows, where AI reduces decision latency and reallocates authority to policy-bound agents.

"Execution will gradually move out of traditional interfaces and into platforms that control enterprise context and safely delegate work. Human roles will shift, not disappear, as they become an Agent Steward that supervises outcomes rather than performing tasks," it said.

These market shifts will force enterprises and independent software vendors into a structural choice: redesign around delegated execution and control planes or remain as an interface layer, allowing agents to route around them.

Because of this, Gartner predicts that by 2030, software companies that layer bolt-on AI over legacy applications rather than redesigning for agentic execution will face margin compression of up to 80%.

"In this environment, execution authority is not a product feature. It is an architectural position that spans control over identity, permissions, policy enforcement, system-of-record access, and auditability," said Alastair Woolcock, VP Analyst at Gartner. "Vendors that embed AI within this control plane will shape workflow execution. Vendors that treat AI as an enhancement layer risk being abstracted," Woolcock added.

BEL to manufacture RxT17 Hemodialysis machine

BENGALURU, DHNS: Defence PSU Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) has obtained the licence from Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) to manufacture (for sale/distribution) its indigenously developed Hemodialysis machine, BEL RxT17.

BEL RxT17, designed by Renalyx, is one of India's first indigenous Hemodialysis machines, a significant milestone for India's Medtech sector. "It is a boon for patients suffering from chronic renal failure, facilitating safe, efficient and high-quality dialysis therapy," the company said in a statement.

BEL RxT17 is CE Certified. It features a colour touchscreen display that provides an advanced user interface with real-time information on device status, readings and active alarms. It is equipped with both audio and visual alarms for critical conditions.

Driven by a surge in the cases of End-Stage Renal Disease, the demand for dialysis is increasing rapidly in India, and the BEL RxT17 aims to improve accessibility and affordability of dialysis care.

Forex reserves drop by $10.29 bn

MUMBAI, PTI: India's forex reserves dropped by $10.288 billion to $688.058 billion during the week ended March 27, the RBI said on Friday.

In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had declined by $11.413 billion to $698.346 billion.

The kitty had expanded to an all-time high of $728.494 billion during the week ended February 27, before the onset of the West Asia conflict.

The rupee has come under pressure since the start of the conflict, and the RBI has been intervening through dollar sales and has taken some measures to harness the fall.

For the week ended March 27, foreign currency assets decreased by $6.622 billion to $551.072 billion. Value of gold reserves decreased by $3.666 billion to $113.521 billion during the week, the RBI said.

RBI nod for ENBD Bank to buy majority stake in RBL Bank

NEW DELHI, PTI: The RBI has accorded approval to Dubai-based Emirates NBD Bank to acquire a stake of up to 74% in RBL Bank, paving the way for it to become a foreign lender.

The approval from RBI came on April 1 with one-year validity, RBL Bank said in a regulatory filing on Thursday.

The approval follows Emirates NBD Bank, the second largest in the UAE, expressing its interest in October 2025 to acquire a majority 60% stake in RBL Bank for Rs 26,853 crore.

As per the approval letter, the Emirates NBD (ENBD) would acquire and maintain a shareholding of at least 51% of the paid-up share capital of RBL Bank and the bank would be classified as a foreign bank in subsidiary mode, with the investor as its parent foreign bank.

"The provisions applicable to foreign banks operating in wholly-owned subsidiary mode, as set out in Chapter IV of the Reserve Bank of India (Commercial Banks — Governance) Directions, 2025, dated November 28, 2025, shall be applicable to the bank, except the requirement to have at least half of the directors attending board meetings to be independent directors shall not apply," it said.

Japan firm picks 49% stake in Vertex

BENGALURU, DHNS: Japan-based logistics and engineering company Konoike Group has acquired 49% stake in engineering firm Vertex Engineers, as part of its efforts to diversify and expand its engineering and infrastructure capabilities in India.

Under the ownership structure, Vertex Engineers will retain a 51% majority stake, while Konoike Group will hold 49% as a strategic partner. The partnership will initially focus on industrial markets across Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.

Demand for upskilling courses rise amid job uncertainty: IIM Kozhikode director

GYANENDRA KESHRI
KOZHIKODE, DHNS

Debashis Chatterjee

Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode (IIM Kozhikode) Director Debashis Chatterjee said there has been a sharp jump in the number of working professionals opting for upskilling and reskilling programmes.

Referring to nearly 30,000 layoffs by Oracle, Chatterjee said the development underlines the need for continuous upskilling in the changing technological environment.

Accordingly, IIM Kozhikode has opened admissions for its executive post-graduate programme in management, targeted to help working professionals upgrade their skills while continuing their jobs.

Over 700 working professionals may enroll for the 19th batch of IIM Kozhikode's Executive Post-Graduate Programme (EPGP) in Management. "The EPGP has consistently brought together professionals from varied sectors, functions and career stages into a cohort defined by intellectual depth, diversity of perspective and a shared commitment to growth," said Chatterjee.

"We remain committed to nurturing globally-minded, technologically-fluent and socially-conscious managers, who can lead with judgement, agility and purpose in a rapidly changing business environment today," he added.

Designed to support leadership development and career progression, the EPGP combines the flexibility of interactive online learning at dedicated centres, at participant's city of residence/work, along with the depth of immersive campus engagement over two years.

With over 750 contact hours, the programme helps participants strengthen their understanding of core business functions, sharpen strategic thinking and engage with emerging themes shaping enterprise decision-making.

In the first year, learners build a strong grounding in management fundamentals across four quarters, covering courses from various areas such as finance and accounting, decision sciences and operations management, marketing, strategy, human resources and organisational behaviour, economics, and humanities, liberal arts and management.

In the second year, the programme moves into three semesters of advanced study, allowing participants to choose from a wide range of electives, including corporate strategy, digital transformation, AI for business, Gen AI, responsible AI, entrepreneurship and innovation, Mapping Managerial Excellence: Insights from the Bhagavad Gita, Story Telling Artistry, Corporate Wellness through Karma Yoga, leadership and change management, international business, business simulations and other specialised subjects.

(The journalist visited this event at the invitation of IIM Kozhikode)

NATIONAL SEEDS CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of India Undertaking)
Regional Office : Bangalore - 24. (CIN No.: U 74899 DL 1963 GOI 003913)
Phone : 080-2341 5816. E-mail : rm.bangalore@indiaseeds.com,
nscbangalore.mktg@gmail.com Website : www.indiaseeds.com

No. : 7(4)/Tender/Mktg/NSC-BNG/2026-27 Date : 03-04-2026

NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT)

National Seeds Corporation Limited, Regional Office, Bangalore invites NIT through Online for Purchase of Certified **Seeds of Groundnut (Pods), Soyabean & Sunflower** and Truthfully Labelled **Seeds of Green Manure Seeds** from reputed Seed Producers. For further details visit our **Website : www.indiaseeds.com.** NIT Document can be Downloaded from **Website : https://indiaseeds.enivida.com** from **04-04-2026, 13.00 hrs. Last Date for Submission of Online Tender is 20-04-2026 till 14.00 hrs.**

Sd/- Regional Manager,
National Seeds Corporation, Bangalore.

Government of Karnataka
The Executive Engineer, Public Works Department, Hassan Division, Hassan.
No: EE/PWD/HSN/JE-5/2026-27/ DATED: 02.04.2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION NO: 01/2026-27, Dated: 02.04.2026.

Tender is invited by the Public Works Department on behalf of the Governor of Karnataka, as per Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000, Standard Tender Document KW-4 from the eligible registered Contractors of Karnataka PWD. Tenders Invited through E-Procurement for total Number of 02 Works under PWD, Sakaleshpura Sub Division. The Amount put to tender is Rs.196.10 Lakhs and Rs.321.50 Lakhs. Last date & time for receipt of tender is on 15.04.2026 @ 16.00 hours. For more details visit https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in or contact this office through Phone No. 08172-268437 or in person during office hours.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, PWD,
Hassan Division, Hassan.

ಪಾಸಾಪಂ/ಹಿಸನಿ/ಹಾಸನ/11/ಕೆಎಸ್.ಎಂಸಿಎ/2026–27

Don't Miss
Tomorrow's DH on Sunday

DH DECCAN HERALD

BIG PICTURE — The rise of the peptide economy.
BOOKS — When symbols are under siege...
ART & PURSUITS — Tribute to the 'king of the seas'.
TRAVEL — A visit to the spectacular Easter Island.
GENDER — The invisible burden of festivals on women.
FOOD & DRINK — Kitchen rage: Passion or abuse?

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The Raichur and Koppal District Central Cooperative Bank Ltd

Ref: RKDCC/BD/MunirabadInterior/ Date:02.04.2026

e-Procurement Tender Notice

The Raichur and Koppal District Central Co-Operative Bank Ltd., Raichur invites e-Tender reference no: RDCCB/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT8 "Tender for Detailed Estimate For Aluminum Partition & Furniturng Works In New Premises For R.K.D.C.C Bank Munirabad (Hulagi) Branch Tq & Dt. Koppal "Tender Schedule and details can be obtained from KPPPortal https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

Sd/- **(M B Pujar)**
Chief Executive Officer
R K D C C BANK Ltd., Raichur.

An 'eggs'traordinary Easter

Rahul is surprisingly not interested in an exciting school project. Suryakumari Dennison tells you about it

Don't forget to bring your eggs on Monday," said Ms Sandhya. "If each of you brings even a few, we should have enough for the less-privileged people in this area. Make your eggs as attractive as possible." She smiled at Rahul. "Your Nowruz eggs looked too good to eat," she said warmly. "I'm sure your Easter eggs will be just as remarkable."

"I hoped we had finished with this egg business in March," muttered Rahul to Arun, as the teacher left.

Arun stared at his friend in surprise. "I thought you enjoyed decorating those Nowruz eggs," he said. "Anyway, as you know, it is the policy of our school to observe every festival. Not a bad idea, if you ask me," continued Arun cheerfully. "We had delicious treats at Eid and Ugadi, and a lot of fun during Holi."

Seeing Rahul's gloomy expression, Arun went on, "As you know, I'll be out of town over the long weekend, but meanwhile, if there is anything I can do..." Arun paused, then added gently, "I know how anxious you are about your mother. My parents, sister and I are praying for her."

"Thanks, Arun," said Rahul gratefully. "Have a great holiday!"

"Happy Easter in advance!" said Arun, as he waved goodbye. "Your eggs are sure to be the best. You are an amazing artist."

Back home, Rahul threw himself on his bed. At Nowruz, his mother had presented him with six perfectly boiled eggs, and all he had to do was paint them. Not long after, she had taken ill and been rushed to hospital. She had been there for eight days, growing steadily weaker, but the doctors seemed unable to find out what was wrong. A distant relative had grudgingly offered to help out at home. She turned out unpalatable meals, and Rahul and his father suffered in silence. If they complained, the grim-faced lady might walk out in a huff. Then they would have to depend on takeaways, something they could not afford with mounting medical bills.

Since Alice aunty made everything she did seem like a distasteful duty, Rahul could not enlist her help with the eggs. Aware that both she and his father would be away on the evening of Easter Sunday, Rahul decided to boil the eggs in their absence. He vaguely recalled his mother's handling of the task and believed he could manage by himself.

When the moment came, however, nothing went right. As Rahul slipped the eggs into hot water, their shells split. Too late, he remembered that his mother used to put in some salt so that, if cracks occurred, the egg whites would coagulate quickly instead of leaking out.

When Rahul finally got the pan off the stove, he fought back tears; his eggs were a mess. He had no chance to experiment further, as his aunt returned earlier than expected. "I'm back from my prayer meeting," she announced in a virtuous tone. It struck Rahul that, while Alice aunty was extremely religious, she was not one bit kind. Before she could enter the kitchen, Rahul ran to his room with the eggs, which were clearly in no fit state to be painted.

This was a bitter blow to the boy, who had looked forward to adorning his eggs with imaginative designs. On Monday, he watched sadly as colourful creations, starred, striped and speckled, were displayed. "Show us your eggs, Rahul," said Ameena eagerly, as the children crowded round him. When Ms Sandhya removed the cloth that covered Rahul's basket, there was a stunned silence.

The teacher suddenly remembered hearing about Rahul's mother and blamed herself for being remiss. Forestalling caustic comments, she addressed the class. "Rahul's flawed eggs are as beautiful as any of yours," she declared firmly. "All of you had assistance, but Rahul managed alone. We must appreciate his efforts."

Later that day, when Rahul and his father went to the hospital, they were delighted to learn that a specialist had arrived at a diagnosis. His mother could be discharged soon, but she would have to follow a strict diet. "No eggs," she said, grinning mischievously. Realising that she had heard about his culinary misadventure, Rahul chuckled. "Some eggs are good for health, Mummy," he said. "Sandhya ma'am says that Easter eggs represent renewal. For our family," he concluded happily, "this season marks a bright beginning!"

2 DIY experiments using magnets

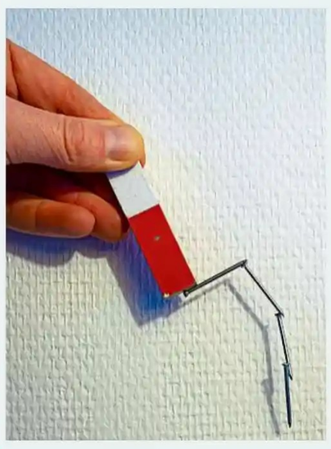
... and household items

Fishing game

Materials needed
- Paper (coloured or white)
- Scissors
- Paper clips
- A small magnet
- String or thread
- A stick or pencil (to make the fishing rod)
- A bowl or tray (optional, to place the fish in)

Method
1) Cut out small fish shapes from paper and colour them or make them from coloured paper.
2) Clip one paper clip to each fish.
3) To make the fishing rod, tie a string to a stick or pencil.
4) Attach a magnet to the other end of the string.
5) To set up the game, place the fish in a bowl, tray, or on the floor.
6) Start fishing! Use the magnetic rod to "catch" the fish.

What did you learn?
Some materials (like metal in paper clips) are magnetic, and magnets can pull objects without touching them directly.



Chain experiment

Materials needed
- A strong magnet
- Iron nails or paper clips

Method
1) Hold the magnet in your hand.
2) Bring one nail close to the magnet so it sticks.
3) Pick up the next nail with the first one. Keep adding more nails one by one.
4) See how long the chain can grow before it falls.

What did you learn?
Magnets can induce magnetism in other metal objects. However, the strength of a magnet has limits, which can be seen when the chain eventually falls.

The most amazing place in the world...

Open Sesame readers write verses about their favourite place

K for Karnataka

Karnataka is so bright,
A blend of culture, pure delight.
In Karnataka, temples stand tall,
With classical music and dances for all.
Sandalwood scents fill the air,
In rich silk sarees, beauty to share.
From Mysuru to Hampi's great stone,
History whispers in every bone.
Dosa and coffee, flavours divine,
In Karnataka, traditions shine.
NAGARJUNA N, 14
Mangaluru, Karnataka

World of books

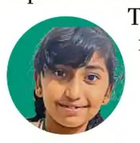
Imagine you're in a place where you're lost,
In a land like Antarctica, covered in frost,
Or in a place like the Sahara, where it's boiling hot.
You could be somewhere truly absurd,
Like a magical world of witches and wizards.
In some journeys, you may get jump scares,
In others, your immense laughter flares.
Still don't understand what I'm talking about?
The world of books is mesmerising, be it thin or stout!
The fantastic world of books is my favourite place to be,
Where I can let my imagination run wild and free!
RIYA JHINGRAN, 11
Bengaluru, Karnataka

The meadow of daffodils

My favourite place
Is the beautiful meadow of daffodils.
Whenever I feel down
Or wear a frown,
I go to this quaint place
Where I can hear the chirping of birds.
There, I take out my journal
And scribble down words.
This amazing place is a blessing,
It's like magic is happening all around me!
Around me, the fireflies dance;
Looking at them is such a thrill!
The most amazing place in my world
Is the beautiful meadow of daffodils!
MOKSHA KANNATTI, 11
Bengaluru, Karnataka

Lovely lake

The lake is calm, so still and bright,
Shining softly in the light.
Clear blue water, cool and deep,
Where silent waves gently sleep.
Birds fly low and touch the sky,
Clouds float slowly, drifting by.
The breeze is soft, the air so sweet,
Nature feels so calm and neat.
By the lake, I love to stay,
Peaceful thoughts come my way.
A place so beautiful, fresh, and free,
The lovely lake means much to me.
RITANYA PATIL, 7
Tumakuru, Karnataka



Seashell stories

My favourite place is where waves speak,
In foamy whispers, soft yet unique.
The sea writes secrets on the shore,
Then pulls them back to hide once more.
The sun melts slowly into blue,
Painting dreams in every hue.
Barefoot, I chase the laughing tides,
While winds play songs I feel inside.
Seashells hold stories from afar,
Each one a tiny ocean star.
Here, my heart can wander free,
The beach becomes a part of me.
R INISHA, 13
Bengaluru, Karnataka

ART CORNER — Love painting?

Want to showcase your flair for colours? Send your paintings on the theme 'Amazing April' to *Open Sesame* and stand a chance to get featured in an upcoming edition. Mail photographs of your work to *opensesame@deccanherald.co.in* Open to children below 16 years. Don't forget to mention your name, age, and city. And send us a recent photograph of yourself. Entries close on April 9.

LETTER WRITING

Write an open letter to Punch the monkey

If you could have a conversation with Internet's favourite baby macaque Punch, what would you like to know about him, and what would you tell him about yourself? Write an open letter and share it with us. You stand a chance of being featured in an upcoming edition. Mail your work to *opensesame@deccanherald.co.in* Open to children below 16 years. Don't forget to mention your name, age, and city. And send us a recent photograph. Entries close on April 23.

LET'S DEBATE!

Want to take part in the upcoming *Open Sesame* debate? Share your thoughts in a crisp 200-word essay on the topic 'Should kids choose their own bedtime?' Mail your works to *opensesame@deccanherald.co.in* Entries close on April 16. Open to children below 16 years. Don't forget to mention your name, age, school, and city. And send us a recent photograph.

Word of the Week

zenith

(noun)
— the highest point of something

Usage:
— Neha's career reached its zenith when she won the global award for customer relations.
— The empire was at its zenith before it began to decline.

This Week:

April assortment

Open Sesame Quiz

Take the fun Open Sesame quiz, and stand a chance to win gift vouchers worth Rs 500. Open to children below 16 years.

Q1 Born on April 11, 1794, American orator Edward Everett delivered the main address at the dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery, in 1863. Whose brief speech, delivered next, is better remembered?

Q2 At 12.25 a.m., on April 15, 1912, RMS Carpathia responded to a distress signal from RMS Titanic. Which ship, closer to the stricken vessel, infamously ignored her SOS?

Q3 Earth Day, on April 22, was established in 1970 by Gaylord Nelson, an American politician and environmentalist. What is the Earth Day theme for both 2025 and 2026?

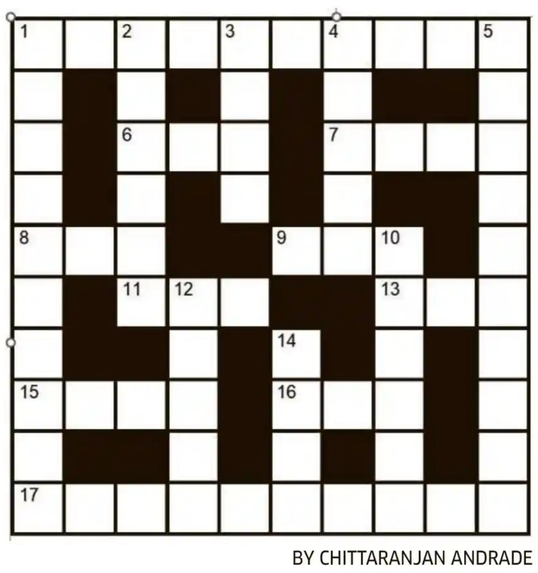
Scan the QR code
Or visit bit.ly/DHopensesame to participate in the quiz.

Q4 **Rhyme Time:** Two clues to which the answers rhyme with each other.
Clue A: Born on April 7, 1770, William Wordsworth wrote 'The Solitary __'.
Clue B: Someone who looks after someone or something.

Q5 **Clue Cluster:** Which battle, fought on April 21, 1526, laid the foundation for Mughal rule in India?
Use these clues.
a) Lodi
b) Babur
c) North
d) Gunpowder

WINNER'S NAMES: R Ramanathàn (12), Bengaluru; Mahalakshmi (14), Bengaluru; Jeraldjackulin (14), Bengaluru.
ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S QUIZ: A1) New Zealand, A2) Kwame Nkrumah, A3) Priyanka Chopra Jonas, A4) Willows/Billows, A5) Adolf Hitler.

CROSSWORD



BY CHITTARANJAN ANDRADE

Across
1 A fool and his money are ___ (4,6)
6 Organ of vision (3)
7 Mineral used in face or body powders (4)
8 Gardening implement (3)
9 Donkey (3)
11 Noise (3)
13 Pair (3)
15 Turn over and over (4)
16 Organ of hearing (3)
17 Absolute power corrupts ___ (10)

Down
1 East Asian country (5,5)
2 Followed instructions (6)
3 Skin of fruit (4)
4 Religious rituals (5)
5 Book containing words and meanings (10)
10 Go without food (6)
12 Eskimo ice house (5)
14 Food card in restaurant (4)

ANSWERS
Across: 1 Soon parted, 6 Eye, 7 Talc, 8 Hoe, 9 Ass, 11 Din, 13 Two, 15 Roll, 16 Ear, 17 Absolutely.
Down: 1 South Korea, 2 Obeyed, 3 Peel, 4 Rites, 5 Dictionary, 10 Starve, 12 Igloo, 14 Menu.

The doctor who waited for HORNBILLS

The pandemic drew many towards nature, and Dr Rathnakar, a physician in Shivamogga, was no exception. Next to his home, he developed a wild patch that now attracts over 30 bird species. He reflects on its rewards and lessons

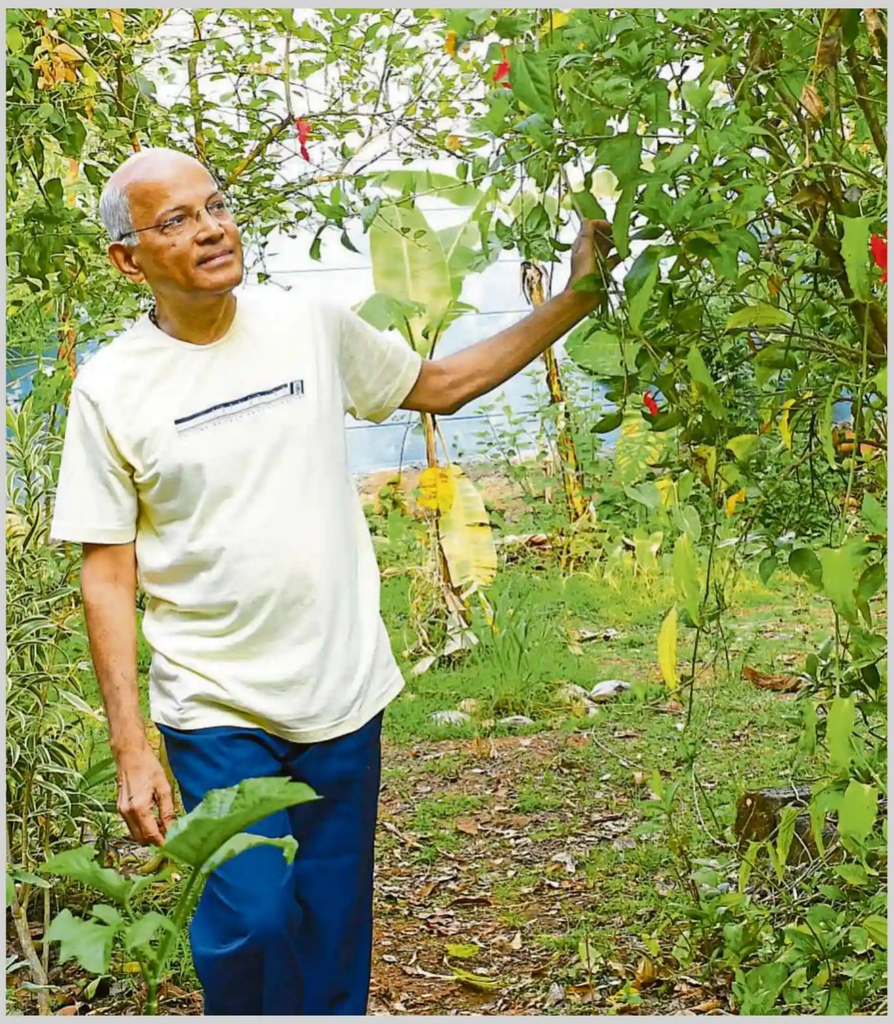
During the first Covid-19 lockdown, I spent every free moment in my garden. One morning, I noticed that the papayas on my tree had ripened. Before I could pluck them the next day, someone had already helped themselves, leaving the fruits half-eaten. I decided to investigate.

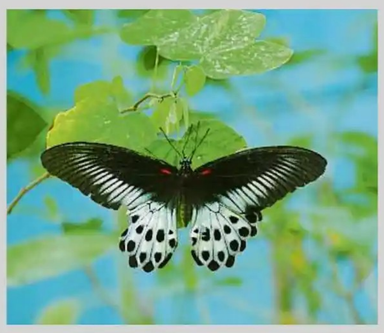
The following morning, at 6.30 am, I took my position by the window, armed with a DSLR camera and a telephoto lens. "Oh my god!" I exclaimed while looking up from my camera. Three Indian grey hornbills were perched on the tree, competing for their share of the papayas. For 15 long years, I had dreamt of seeing them right around my home, rather than in some far-off forest. From that day on, I stopped taking the fruits. My feathered guests took the hint and have been visiting my home in Shivamogga ever since.

India is home to nine species of hornbills, many listed as vulnerable or near threatened by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. Karnataka has four of these striking birds — the Indian grey hornbill, Malabar grey hornbill, Malabar pied hornbill, and the great hornbill. They are called mangatte in Kannada.

Hornbills are large birds with long, curved bills. Many species have a casque on top. It is a hollow, helmet-like structure that resembles a horn. The casque amplifies their calls, and helps with thermoregulation. What truly intrigued me about them was something I read in a Kannada daily in 2005: hornbills are monogamous and devoted partners. During the nesting period, the female seals herself inside a tree cavity and relies on the male to feed her and their chicks. For three months, he brings them fruits, insects, and other small prey. Equally fascinating is the important role they play in forests. They are primarily fruit-eaters, and they help spread seeds over long distances.

The article also mentioned that hornbills can be seen in Dandeli, a town deep in the Western Ghats of Uttara Kannada. Dandeli is part of the Kali Tiger Reserve, and both the reserve and adjoining areas are important hornbill habitats. That was enough. I set out for Dandeli, over 200 km from Shivamogga. I was lucky to spot all four species found in Karnataka. I remember their loud calls echoing through the forest. And the way they ate. They tossed food into the air, caught it in their beaks, and gulped it down in one smooth motion. That visit sparked my fascination with hornbills.





Dr Rathnakar's jungle is spread over a 50x70-foot plot in Shivamogga. It boasts 50 varieties of flowering and medicinal plants, and a dozen trees reaching 25 feet. Squirrels, blue mormon butterflies, and green bee-eaters are regular visitors. PICS: SHIVAMOGGA NAGARAJ

On average, two or three Indian grey hornbills visit the author's garden, but once they arrived in a flock of 21. PIC: DR RATHNAKAR

Keep it wild

How did my garden become a hornbill magnet? I can't say for sure. I am a physician, not a wildlife expert. What I can say is that mine is not an average garden, with manicured lawns and pretty flower beds. It is a mini jungle, with 50 varieties of flowering and medicinal plants and a dozen trees reaching 25 feet. I don't clear fallen leaves; lift one, and you will find earthworms crawling underneath. I don't use pesticides. I let branches grow freely and trim them only when they bother my neighbours. In places, the canopy is so dense that sunlight barely reaches the ground. Perhaps my jungle offers birds a semblance of the forests they are losing to urbanisation. In this 50x70-foot pocket of wilderness, I have documented 38 bird species since the pandemic.

I wasn't always pursuing trees or birds. Being a doctor, my only obsession used to be human anatomy. It was only after I settled into my career, and as Covid-19 slowed the world down, that I began noticing the other forms of life around me.

Although I live in an independent house, there wasn't much space for gardening. So I turned to my relative, a fellow doctor, whose plot next to mine had been lying empty. He lives in the UK. I asked if I could use the land to create an urban jungle. Not only did he let me use it for free, but he also assured me it would probably be the last piece of land he would ever sell.

My family and I started small, with a kitchen garden of vegetables. But as the soil lost fertility, we moved on to growing trees. First came banana and drumstick saplings. Then followed ornamental creepers like blue trumpet vine to attract insects like honeybees. Trees like sandal, Turkey berry, Singapore cherry, and star gooseberry sprang from gifts dropped by birds! The Singapore cherry serves as a sanctuary for bulbuls, koels, barbets, and grey hornbills by day, and a night-time haunt for fruit bats. My wife added lotus ponds to attract kingfishers. Even though I knew about the Miyawaki method for growing mini forests with native species, I let my jungle grow naturally, planting saplings here and there.

Little by little, our jungle grew fuller and more alive. Spiders spun webs, butterflies hovered for nectar, and honeybees built hives. Lizards, snails, and flies went about their busy lives, while drongos, bee-eaters, magpie robins, and Indian robins hunted for insects. Others came for the grains, water, and fruits I put out. For a while, smaller birds like prinias and weavers even nested and bred here, but my cats and predators like shikras and greater coucals chased them away.

One of the rarest birds I have seen in my jungle is the very colourful Indian pitta. It's a migratory bird that comes down from northern India in winter. I spotted it hopping on the ground, looking for worms. It kept visiting for a week, until one day our cat caught it and rushed inside to show us. We managed to wrest the bird out of its mouth and release it. A jungle it is, and only the fittest will survive!

Fruit delight

I invested in a DSLR camera to document their secret lives, and added CCTV cameras to capture moments while I was away at work. During the pandemic, I began leaving out water, rice, biscuit crumbs, and bread in clay plates for sparrows, squirrels, and bulbuls. When my jungle stopped yielding papaya, I began buying them to offer my winged visitors a more varied menu. One day, I found a few of the plates smashed on the terrace floor. I decided to catch the culprit. I peeped through a slightly ajar door the next morning, and there they were again — the Indian grey hornbills! The heavy birds were landing straight on the plates, sending them crashing down. To ease their landing, I built wide granite slabs on the parapet and added bamboo perches above. That did the trick. What began with just a few visitors soon turned into a lively party. I once counted 21 of them in my little jungle. From one or two plates, I was now laying out 10 plates of fruit, some of which were emptied within minutes. It became a ritual. I would wake up by 5 am, chop the fruits, and serve their breakfast by 6. On days I ran late, they made sure I knew. They made loud, insistent calls.

Hornbills have a particular fondness for figs and berries. Since I don't have those in my jungle, I started buying papaya, banana, and muskmelon for them. Papaya is the clear favourite, and they are not big on sharing. A hornbill was leisurely chomping on papaya pieces one day when a squirrel dared to inch closer. Annoyed, the bird took off in a huff. They also relish oleander fruits growing around the house, and it's a delight to watch them skin each one skillfully. But watermelon, apple, and grapes were rejected outright.

One morning, when they were late for breakfast and the fruits ran out, they had to contend with rice meant for other birds. They struggled because it was sticky to eat.

Should I be feeding the birds? What should I avoid? Could it take away their instinct to find food on their own? These questions crossed my mind many times, so I decided not to feed them more than once a day. Some evenings, while I am on the treadmill at home, I see a few hornbills perched on the trees, searching for food. I continue exercising. They fly away.

They forage on their own terms. One day, I watched a hornbill wait for a carpenter bee to crawl into a blue thunbergia flower, corner it, crush it between its beak, toss it up, and gulp it down with relish.

Exclusive show

In Shivamogga of the 1980s, you could spot a forest patch within a kilometre's drive. Now, due to rapid development, you often have to drive up to 10 km to find one. I didn't know where these hornbills came from, but they flew in from all directions. At first, they landed on the trees outside my house, then moved into my jungle, and later approached the granite slabs.

I would later learn from experts that the Indian grey hornbill is commonly found in wooded patches within cities and can be seen on fruiting ficus trees like peepal, banyan, and Mysore fig. They are not a species of "conservation concern".

However, they take time to get comfortable with human presence. In my experience too, they wouldn't come close if I was around. Even the slightest movement would scare them away. So I began by sitting silently in a corner, about 25 feet away, without a camera. Gradually, I started using my DSLR with a telephoto lens and a video camera, first handheld and later on a tripod. Over time, I moved closer, sometimes hiding behind a chair. So far, 15 feet is the closest they have tolerated me.

A month ago, two of my photographer friends came to my home for hornbill-watching. I set up a green net on the terrace for them to hide behind. To our surprise, the hornbills didn't approach the perches. They sat on nearby trees, looked around, and eventually flew off without touching their breakfast. Can they recognise strangers? And do they see me as a friend, a safe feeder? Call it bragging, or a reward I have earned, but even my family hasn't seen hornbills up close. They only catch the action on the CCTV footage or through the videos I record.

One day, I captured a pair in courtship on camera. It was a filmy scene. They were perched on separate branches when their eyes met. The male hopped onto the same branch but sat awkwardly, turned away. Slowly, against a backdrop of flowers swaying on the vines and birdsong growing louder, they turned toward each other.

Hornbills sometimes draw the wrong kind of attention. One morning, as the birds were feeding, a youth from a low-income settlement nearby shot one down with a catapult. The bird fell, grimacing in pain. When he tried to take it away, my wife intervened, pleading until he returned it for Rs 100. The bird was frightened, and it bit both of us as we tried to help, but we managed to place it in a ventilated basket with some fruit. Later that evening, I released it in a nearby green patch. We informed forest officials, who later explained to the local youth that harming wildlife is punishable under the law.

These hornbills are currently in their nesting season. Where a dozen birds once gathered daily in my jungle, only a few visit now, mostly males. Their partners are possibly sealed inside tree cavities, tending to their young. My jungle is quieter now. But I know this silence is not absence. It is life, hidden, waiting to return. If there's one thing the hornbills have taught me, it's that patience pays off.

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MUSICANA

Bengaluru's first senior choir set to make debut

The 20-member group's inclinations range from Broadway musicals to Kannada classics, writes Rashmi Rajagopal

A group of Bengaluru-based senior citizens has come together to form a choir, which will have its debut performance on April 12 at Sabha Blr, Kamaraj Road. Called Silver Songbirds of Bengaluru, they are directed by Soundarie David Rodrigo and Juanita Jayant.

Among its 20 regular members are former foreign secretary of India, Nirupama Menon Rao, and her husband, Sudhakar Rao, former chief secretary to the Karnataka government, apart from a few journalists, corporate leaders, homemakers and music teachers. "The idea was to create a community for senior citizens with similar interests, a safe space where they can come together and connect on something they all resonate with," says writer Sandhya Mendonca, one of the members. The youngest member is 52, and the oldest, 80. "Bernadette D'Souza, the 80-year-old, still works at a school and is more physically active than many 20-year-olds," she shares.

Nirupama, a regular visitor to Colombo, Sri Lanka, stumbled upon a similar group on one of her trips to the island country. Since then, she felt strongly about bringing a similar choir together in Bengaluru, her home city. Two months ago, she put out a post asking interested individuals to sign up and in no time they had numerous candidates, Sandhya recalls. Since then, they have been rehearsing twice a month. Soundarie, the director of the Colombo choir, flew down to Bengaluru for the first few rehearsals and will be visiting the city again for their debut performance.

Sandhya points out that the word 'choir' often conjures images of a church or school group that sticks to religious hymns. However, the Silver Songbirds are nothing of the sort. "Our list of songs spans all genres and languages," Sandhya shares. A particular favourite of hers is 'Some enchanted evening', a ballad from the Broadway musical 'South Pacific', first staged in 1949. "'Que sera sera' is another song we will be singing. Most of these songs were old when we were young. I remember singing this in school with my sister," she recalls. 'Neera bittu nelada mele', a S P Balasubrahmanyam hit from the Kannada film 'Hombisilu', will also be a part of the list. 'Dancing queen' by Abba and 'I believe' by Elvis Presley are some of the other popular numbers the group has been practising. In the run-up to their debut show, the group performed as a part of Soundarie's choir in Colombo two weeks ago. "That was a fun experience and gave us the confidence that we can do it ourselves," she states, and adds, "As you grow older, you become almost invisible. But being a part of a community like this, makes you feel seen."

The Silver Songbirds of Bengaluru was formed in February 2026.

War films must transcend mere spectacle and strive to find a meaningful balance between technical finesse, moral values and character arcs, writes Ritwik Kaikini

Beyond bravado AND BOMBAST

A war is brewing, and uncertainty looms over the world. It drives us to appreciate what we have and who we love. Films have always been at the forefront of documenting daunting memories of massacre and love amidst war-borne heartaches through strong musical themes and unique visual poetry.

In 'The Cranes Are Flying' (1957), Georgian filmmaker Mikhail Kalatozov and the prolific Soviet cinematographer Sergei Urusevsky master an adventurous visual technique. Viewers become vulnerable pawns amidst a world of human beings, geometric compositions, and partially lit artefacts. Set against the backdrop of World War II, the film opens with a young, love-struck couple prancing like synchronised grasshoppers along the riverbank, pausing to look at a flock of cranes flying in the sky. A radiant Veronica (played by Tatiana Samoilova) is hopeful of a promising future with the tender-eyed Boris (Aleksey Batalov). In the following scene, Boris follows her home. He runs behind her, up a staircase, inside a multi-storeyed building, while trying to avoid prying eyes. A precisely calculated helical-revolving shot gives us a sensation of gliding smoothly up along the railings over many floors in a hypnotic, boomerang-like trajectory. We experience the point of view of an agile crane, flying between the young lovers into a spiral of upward hope.

War's harshest venom is uncertainty. When the Germans invade Soviet territory, Boris volunteers to join the army, putting Veronica's dreams of a happily married life on hold. When it is time for Boris to leave, Veronica fails to reach him in time to say goodbye. In the long take, Veronica pops her head in and out of the bus twice, gets down, and frantically makes her way through the crowd-filled streets, searching for Boris before vanishing between two moving war tanks. The camera lurks next to her, then floats behind her, and she eventually grows smaller in the frame. The handheld aesthetic invokes a strong participatory effect. The focal change, from close-up to wide, captures Veronica's frailty and overwhelming devotion viscerally. The camera movements mimic the emotional temperature of the film, from euphoric love to longing, to tension, to misery, and eventually, acceptance.

Kalatozov's mastery lies in achieving the experience of widescreen cinema within the 35 mm monochrome format. Cinematographer Sergey Urusevsky develops a way of tracing character growth through varied use of lighting. The shadows on the characters' faces signal residues of virtues muted by war. Characters who absorb collective angst and defy fear become totems for a radically humanist outlook in times of helplessness.

Tatiana Samoilova and Aleksey Batalov in 'The Cranes are Flying' (1957), a poignant film capturing love and loss during World War II.

A scene from 'Turtles can Fly', set in a refugee camp on the Iraq-Turkey border against the backdrop of the US invasion of Iraq.

Visual aesthetics, aural cues and succinct writing can determine whether cinematic moments can transcend the screen and make their way into our dreams, informing our moral compass.

In David Lean's 'Doctor Zhivago' (1965), the protagonist Yuri Zhivago (Omar Sharif) is a sensitive poet-physician who is convinced that art and love can help humanity survive the war. Through 'Lara's Theme', composed by Maurice Jarre, Lean underlines Yuri's longing for his beloved and the harsh precariousness that war brings. In Bahman Ghobadi's 'Turtles Can Fly' (2004), the adolescent Kak Satellite (Soran Ebrahim) helps dismantle land mines with the help of other children. He carries a weathered compassion in his eyes in a war-torn landscape.

Documentary-style realism can further heighten our immersion, bringing forth a spiritual lightness in humans that arises when all is lost, more than enacted pain. In Abbas Kiarostami's 'And Life Goes On' (1992), set in the aftermath of the 1990 Manjil-Rudbar earthquake, a filmmaker (Farhad Kheradmand) travels through the region in search of a child actor. His son, who is accompanying him, absorbs the broken landscape curiously while Farhad drives with a cool nod, damp smile and a contemplative gaze. When asked about the loss caused by the earthquake, a passerby remarks that their main concern is to fix the satellite to be able to telecast the FIFA World Cup match in their makeshift camp. The film is based on Kiarostami's search for the stars of his previous film, 'Where Is the Friend's Home?'.

Technically superior war films portraying unjustified violence to foster short bursts of adrenaline in an audience can confuse the moral compass of a society. 'How can technique or form be divorced from content?', says film scholar Ira Bhaskar in a recent interview. What is portrayed equally matters as to how it is portrayed. 'Ikkis' (2026), directed by Sriram Raghavan, is an important example of keeping human relationships central to the main narrative in the war biopic genre.

Seeking audience attention should not come at the cost of gratuitous violence or propaganda that furthers the divide between communities. Instead, war films must seek to question the intention of war and liberate viewers through deeply human narratives.

(The author is a musician and educator based in Mumbai)

FEEDBACK
Send your ideas and comments to dhonsat @deccanherald.co.in

Watch-list

The Cranes are Flying (1957, Mikhail Kalatozov/ YouTube/ Mosfilm)

Ivan's Childhood (1962, Andrei Tarkovsky/ Plex TV)

Doctor Zhivago (1965, David Lean/ Prime Video)

The Killing Fields (1984, Roland Joffé/ Internet Archive)

And Life Goes On... (1992, Abbas Kiarostami/ Mubi)

Life is Beautiful (1997, Roberto Benigni/ Prime Video)

The Thin Red Line (1998, Terrence Malick/ Criterion Collection)

Turtles Can Fly (2004, Bahman Ghobadi/ YouTube)

Ikkis (2026, Sriram Raghavan/ Prime Video)

A return to the simple and familiar?

A Kannada movie franchise continues to resonate with audiences through familiarity, emotion, and word of mouth, despite the industry's shift towards pan-India 'content', writes Pranati A S

When a film earns Rs 13 crore today, it may not seem like much in a box office culture obsessed with Rs 100 crore milestones. But for a Kannada film made on a Rs 2 crore budget, earning that in just 15 days — despite releasing alongside a big ticket like 'Dhurandhar 2' — is no small feat.

That is what 'Love Mocktail 3' has managed to do.

Darling Krishna and Milana Nagaraj return with an entertainer rooted in warmth and love, one that has struck a chord with audiences.

'Love Mocktail 3' portrays a different kind of man, someone you rarely see in movies and in real life — a single father with an adopted daughter. And all he fights for is for his daughter. The film is driven by that sentiment, and not once does it feel too much. That makes the movie refreshing and Krishna's character, Adi, a man to vouch for.

At a time when every movie is trying to follow a trend, and when every other actor wants to be an alpha male, Krishna brings back his character from 2022 to tell a heartwarming story of a father and daughter. Years after personal loss — the death of his wife Nidhi (Milana Nagaraj) — Adi now finds purpose in raising his adopted daughter, whom he calls Nidhi. The bond they share becomes the emotional anchor of 'Love Mocktail 3'.

The child played by Samvrutha is naughty and lovable. Her shenanigans are amusing, prompting brief bursts of laughter. Apart from a few silly jokes and Shwetha Prasad's Leela — a lawyer advocating for men to have equal rights as women to adopt a girl child — the film is quite enjoyable. Even then, the film as a whole does not outright endorse Leela's courtroom argument.

In that sense, the film is also politically aware. The character 'Jagga Mummy', a trans person navigating their gender, is called "mummy" by the little girl, and they are visibly elated. It becomes a quiet and powerful moment of recognition — of identity and belonging. The character also redefines the idea of 'mother sentiment', a common trope in Kannada cinema. It has also arrived at a time when there is an ongoing debate around amendments to the transgender bill.

In an industry increasingly driven by 'pan-India' spectacle, Krishna and Milana have built one of Kannada cinema's most unlikely franchises. It is a rare example of a successful trilogy. Like most sequels, 'Love Mocktail 2' did feel like a bit of a drag, but the franchise, in its final exploration, redeems itself.

Although there have been multiple other Kannada films like 'Ibbani Tabbida Ileyali', that are on similar notes — high on emotions, romantic, and entertaining — what explains the success of 'Love Mocktail 3'?

Film critic Swaroop Kodur believes it is the audience's trust in a homegrown brand that has risen quietly and steadily. "Krishna and Milana resonate with the Kannada-speaking crowd because they seem to understand what their audience responds to," he says, also partly attributing it to the recency effect.

People may like movies like 'Ibbani...' and other acclaimed films, but there has been some hesitation among audiences to take the 'risk' of watching a new film by new makers — a trust that the 'KrisMi' couple have somehow managed to build.

For most people who want to watch something with their whole family without too much fuss, 'Love Mocktail 3' seems like a good choice. Many who paid close to Rs 400 said the film was worth their money. Reiterating a producer-distributor's comment on the Rs 200 cap on movie tickets, "If the audience feels the film is worth their money and time, ticket prices are never the problem."

All said and done, watching a Kannada movie with an almost full house on a weekday, in the middle of the IPL season, was a fulfilling experience.

Darling Krishna and his on-screen daughter Samvrutha in 'Love Mocktail 3'.

MOVIE R|E|V|I|E|W|S

Enjoyable macho thriller but lacks depth

ARUN ANTONY

★★½☆☆

Muthu Engira Kaattaan

Tamil (JioHotstar)

Creator: M Manikandan

Cast: Vijay Sethupathi, Milind Soman, Sudev Nair

There are two types of thrillers in Tamil cinema — gritty and filled with blood, or stylistic potboilers that offer little in substance. 'Muthu Engira Kaattaan' attempts something in between — with varying degrees of success.

The series has an unusual start. The protagonist's severed head is found by a shepherd in the woods. The story advances through the police investigation. Everyone questioned by the police has their own version of the character and his deeds.

What the series genuinely gets right is its cultural representation. Kerala is portrayed without the usual shorthand of over-the-top visuals and performative exoticism. Other languages and communities are treated with the same restraint. There's an observed quality to how culture is treated, which is rare. The series also does something Tamil cinema rarely does: it casts Tamil women in a narrative that engages with power and hierarchy. That alone is worth noting.

Vijay Sethupathi plays Muthu.

Vijay Sethupathi is, as always, effortlessly believable. The charm is never performed — it simply exists. Milind Soman walks in and commands every scene without visible effort. The driver of the story, though, is Vettai Muthukumar's sub-inspector and Singamuli's constable. Some of the subplots come across as interesting stories.

There are genuinely good character moments scattered across the series that remind you of what it could have been with sharper writing. However, Muthu, as a character, never develops beyond his surface appeal. The villains are flat. The female leads are limited to just reacting. And the series has a tendency to spoon-feed the audience. At its core, this remains a well-produced, enjoyable macho vehicle, but one that mistakes momentum for depth.

Game over: Nothing super about this galaxy

TAHER AHMED

★★☆☆☆

The Super Mario Galaxy Movie

English (Theatres)

Director: Aaron Horvath

Cast: Chris Pratt, Anya Taylor-Joy, Charlie Day

Nostalgia can often take you to new places and heights, but unfortunately, in the case of 'The Super Mario Galaxy Movie', it seems that the pull of gravity is just dragging it to new lows.

Replicating the success of a cult game on the big screen is hard. And this adaptation fails to stick to the landing, ultimately finding itself in a pipe which leads to the drain.

The comedy is based on the 2007 video game Super Mario Galaxy.

Mario and Luigi return, this time to save Princess Rosalina, who has been abducted by Bowser Jr determined to make his dad proud. Bowser Jr has created a galaxy envisioned by Bowser, with Rosalina destined to be the power source for his diabolical weapon.

Princess Peach is the first one to embark on this rescue mission, leaving Mario and Luigi in charge of the Mushroom Kingdom. The plot then goes the predictable route, as the brothers join the Princess and make new friends along the way.

There is nothing new or exciting about this movie, but for the exception of Bowser, who undergoes a metamorphosis in his behaviour.

So how does a classic game go from evoking nostalgic memories to making you wonder who wrote the script and why? The movie feels forced on occasions and extremely predictable. The only saving grace is Bowser, who leaves a bigger impact than anyone else.

Ultimately, this movie could have used some really good plumbers to fix the multiple leaks.

Rise, fall, repeat

AMOGH RAVINDRA

Netflix's 'Untold: The Death & Life of Lamar Odom' follows a familiar path. Fame, fall, and a slow climb back. It is a story we have seen before, but Odom's life gives it weight. The film keeps things simple and lets him do most of the talking.

The documentary is about an ex-NBA star.

★★☆☆☆

Untold: The Death and Life of Lamar Odom

English (Netflix)

Director: Ryan Duffy

The documentary moves quickly through his basketball career. Championships, the Lakers years, the spotlight. Then it shifts to his life off the court, and slows down a bit. His marriage to Khloé Kardashian, the sudden fame that came with it, and how that attention started to build pressure. What looks stable from the outside slowly begins to crack.

His drug addiction and how it quietly takes over becomes the centre of the story. He talks about hiding it, losing control, and the people around him not always knowing how bad things had become. The overdose is handled without spectacle. It is not built up like a twist, just presented as the point where everything finally breaks. Odom speaks about it with a kind of distance, like he is still trying to process it. Recovery is not shown as a clean turnaround. It feels uncertain and fragile. Like most 'Untold' entries, the film is clean and straightforward. Interviews, archive footage, and a steady timeline. It moves fast, sometimes too fast. Big moments do not get the time they need. There is enough here to keep one engaged, mostly because of Odom himself. But it feels more like a recap than a deep dive. Good in parts, but not lasting.

Quick takes

Daali Pictures goes pan-universe?

▸ Actor-turned-producer Daali Dhananjaya announced a new film under his banner and it is called 'Mother Promise' with the tagline, 'Father of all promises'. The film, directed by Poornachandra Mysore, has grabbed eyeballs for its unique promotion style. The title reveal was in 7-odd languages, where it was termed to be a 'pan-universe' film. One may think they are taking a dig at the pan-India obsession. But a fresh poster said the gangster comedy is a pan-universe 'emotion'. Wonder what's universal? Cinema's favourite trope — maternal emotion, paternal approval!

Ranbir Chitra Katha

▸ Expect the buzz to peak around Ranbir Kapoor's look in Namit Malhotra's suggestively titled magnum opus 'Ramayana – Our Truth, Our History'. Yet, some feel the makers missed a golden deer, sorry, opportunity, to reimagine Rama. What we get instead is Ranbir in the same gilt-heavy, bling-laden aesthetic, seemingly lifted straight from 1980s Amar Chitra Katha panels. This straightjacket calendar-kitsch vision of our epics, is also "our truth, our history" one supposes.

Merlet wins feature

KOLKATA RESULTS

Merlet, trained by S Waheed and ridden by R Vaibhav, won the Punter's Delight Handicap, the feature event of the races on Friday.

1. The Beat The Distance Handicap - 1200M: No Worry (Hindu Singh) 1, Diamond Gold (P Trevor) 2, Hermes (Neeraj) 3, Simran's Attitude (A Asbar) 4. Not Run: Godsend Divine; WB: 2, 3-1/4, 11/2. T: 1:13.84. TB: Rutherford. Fav: No Worry.
2. The Robin Hood Cup - 1400M: India Jack (P Trevor) 1, Sporting Trainer (A Prakash) 2, Royal King (Suraj Narredu) 3, Cashaban (Arman Khan) 4. WB: 1/2, Dist, 2 1/2. T: 1:25.99. TB: Rutherford Fav: Indian Jack.
3. The Adelita Handicap (Div I) - 1100M: Rudra (Md Azharuddin) 1, Cache (Suraj Narredu) 2, Bundle of Charm (P Tajeshwar) 3, Noorie (R Vaibhav) 4. WB: Nk, 2, 2-1/2; T: 1:06.02. TB: Rutherford Fav: Cache.
4. The Adelita Handicap (Div II) - 1100M: Sir Winston (Suraj Narredu) 1, Hours The Great (Jitu Singh) 2, Honey Cake (RS Bhati) 3, Priceless Prince (Vikrant) 4. WB: 2-3/4, Shd, 3/4. T: 1:06.26. TB: Vijay Singh Fav: Sir Winston.
5. The Sunday Handicap 1600M: Royal Member (Hindu Singh) 1, Verrazzano (Suraj Narredu) 2, Mighty Zo (A Asbar) 3, Seina (V Bunde) 4. WB: 3/4, 1-1/4, 2-1/2. T: 1:38.48. TB: Javad Khan Fav: Verrazzano.
6. The Punters Delight Handicap - 1200M: Merlet (R Vaibhav) 1, Conjurer (Neeraj) 2, Ghirardelli (V Bunde) 3, Cashaban (Suraj Narredu) 4. WB: 3/4, Lnk, Hd. T: 1:11.72. TB: S Waheed Fav: Conjurer.
7. The Cupid Handicap (Div I) - 1200M: Cash N Run (Suraj Narredu) 1, Three Little Words (Neeraj) 2, Whirlwind (Nikhil Naidu) 3, Keitaro (Hindu Singh) 4. WB: Lnk, 3-1/2, 4/4. T: 1:11.28. TB: Sabeel Shariff. Fav: Cash N Run.
8. The Cupid Handicap (Div II) - 1200M: Gimmler (Neeraj) 1, Jimmy Bee (V Bunde) 2, Clever Hans (Hindu Singh) 3, Marcolini (RS Bhati) 4. WB:1-1/4, 1-1/4, 1-1/4. T: 1:12.11. TB: Rutherford. Fav: Enchanting.

Bengaluru dividends
I race: Rs 31 w; 13, 13, 12p; Shp: Rs 30; Thp: Rs 39; Fc: Rs 64; Q: Rs 28; Tri: Rs 174 & 89; Exp: Rs 402 & 142.
II race: Rs 16 w; 10, 12, 16p; Shp: Rs 32; Thp: Rs 35; Fc: Rs 52; Q: Rs 30; Tri: Rs 93 & 30; Exp: Rs 2342 & 2342.
III race: Rs 98 w; 26, 10, 20p; Shp: Rs 32; Thp: Rs 30; Fc: Rs 304; Q: Rs 62; Tri: Rs & 1250 & 785; Exp: Rs 2978 & 1787.
IV race: Rs 14 w; 12, 13, 13 p; Shp: Rs: 52; Thp: Rs 33; Fc: Rs 70; Q: Rs 60; Tri: Rs 195 & 68; Exp: Rs 449 & 180.
V race: Rs 86 w; 20, 13, 28p; Shp: Rs 56; Thp: Rs 67; Fc: Rs 174; Q: Rs 56; Tri: Rs 1767 & 897; Exp: Rs 24,215 & 9949.
VI race: Rs 97 w; 28, 12, 27p; Shp: Rs 38; Thp: Rs 76; Fc: Rs 299; Q: Rs 128; Tri: Rs 1832 & 1047; Exp: Rs 41,484 & 8889.
VII race: Rs 16 w; 10, 23, 94p; Shp: Rs 64; Thp: Rs 246; Fc: Rs 131; Q: Rs 84; Tri: Rs 3002 & 1169; Exp: Rs 56,879 & C/F.
VIII race: Rs 50 w; 22, 36, 25p; Shp: Rs 62; Thp: Rs 48; Fc: Rs 1124; Q: Rs 336; Tri: Rs 6260 & 2683; Exp: Rs 21,743 & 18,728.

Jackpot: Rs 21,587 & 1303. **I treble:** Rs 2336. **II treble:** Rs 2605.

Northern Waves for main event

HYDERABAD SELECTIONS

The G Shashikanth-trained Northern Waves, to be ridden by Ajay Kumar, is fancied to win the Brave Dancer Plate, the feature event of the races on Saturday.
The first race starts at 2:55 pm.
1. The Cyndy Plate - 1800M: Mysore Pharaoh 1; Yuvraj 2; Beech Wood 3.
2. The Galactica Plate - 1200M: Cypress 1; Arthisha 2; Dhanadeepa 3.
3. The Grace Hanover Plate (Div I) - 1200M: NRI Triple Power 1; Sharanga 2; Shooting Star 3.
4. The Solitaire Plate - 1400M: NRI Range 1; Gloria 2; CatchMe if You Can 3.
5. The Windscale Plate - 1600M: Toshiro 1, Excalibur 2 Garfunkle 3.
6. The Brave Dancer Plate - 1200M: Northern Waves 1; One N Only 2; Vivaldo 3.
7. Grace Handover Plate (Div II) - 1200M: Ayushman 1; Emerald Touch 2; Greif 3.
8. The Next Move Plate - 1200M: Deccan Ranger 1, American Affair 2. Politics 3.
Day's best: NRI Triple Power. **Jackpot:** 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8.
I treble: 1, 2, 3. **II treble:** 3, 4, 5. **III treble:** 6, 7 &,8.

MNK Rao boys enter final

BENGALURU, DHNS: MNK Rao Park BC confirmed their final berth with an 81-65 victory over PPC 65 (Ryan Joseph 22, Adithya 19) in the State Junior Boys and Girls Championship for the DN Rajanna Trophy at Sree Kanteerava Stadium basketball courts here on Friday.

LOCAL BASKETBALL

Aakash (24 points) and Vijayeendra (19) starred in the victory with major point-hauls while Ryan Joseph (22) and Adithya (19) fought for PPC in what were the final league cum knockout matches.

Results: Boys: Final league-cum-knockout matches: MNK Rao Park: 81 (Aakash 24 points, Vijayeendra 19) bt PPC: 65 (Ryan Joseph 22, Adithya 19); HT: 33-36. HBR: 70 (Rishith 19, Siddhartha 16) bt Viveks SC: 61 (Anshul 23); HT: 25-35.
Girls: Round-robin league matches Results Girls: B'lore-Vanguards: 73 (Mahek Sharma 21, Pranjal 14) bt Viveks SC: 53 (Jeyashree 15, Linisha 15); HT: 45-21. DYES Vidyanagar: 71 (Ishitha 23, Sheetal 14) bt Viveks SC: 37 (Linisha 14); HT: 37-20.

ATHLETICS INDIAN SERIES 1

Sreeshankar eyes good opener

Manikanta, Gurindervir clash in men's 100m final

ADITYA K HALDER
BENGALURU, DHNS

With Asian Games and Commonwealth Games qualification in sight, long jump duo Murali Sreeshankar and Shaili Singh are set to start their season at the Indian Athletics Series 1 at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium in Bengaluru on Saturday.

The venue brings added excitement for jump events as it has seen big jumps in the past.

Former national record holder Sreeshankar, whose personal best is 8.41 metre (in 2023), starts his season after missing out on Indian Open Jump participation, will face some competition from Hasan boy Purushotham, who won that event with his career best of 7.87. Odisha's Sarun Payasingh, who won the National Indoors, will look to improve his best further after a 7.81 attempt in Bhubaneswar last month.

The women's final, however, may attract more eyeballs as long jump prodigy Shaili will be up against Asian Games silver medallist Ancy Sojan, who is all set to start her outdoor season after a bronze at the Asian Indoors in February.

Shaili's training partner Mubassina Mohammed (the duo is trained by Dronacharya awardee Robert Bobby George in Kengeri) will add further depth to the competition as the youngster will look to improve on her personal best of 6.38.

The one-day event has gained significance for track and field athletes, especially those who are training in the southern region of the country as the Athletics Federation of India once again clarified that those aspiring can't just qualify by breaching the qualification standards.

They must compete in at least a state and two national-level events to be eligible for the AFI's four-day events -- May's National Senior Athletics Federation Competition (Ranchi) and June's National Inter-State Senior Athletics Championships (Bhubaneswar) -- that have been billed as mandatory events in order to qualify for the CWG and Asiad respectively.

Murali Sreeshankar begins the crucial 2026 season with Indian Athletics Series 1 after missing out on Indian Open Jump Competiton in Bengaluru and National Indoors last month.

The men's 100m final is going to be a spectacle too as Karnataka's Manikanta Hoblidhar has a point to prove after disqualification in his last two events, including the Asian Indoors. Having somebody like Gurindervir Singh, who is in red-hot form with back-to-back national record timings in indoors 60m and mixed 4x100m relays, in the competition means one can expect a fast race, given the worn-out tracks of Kanteerava don't play the spoilsport.

Meanwhile, men's 800m national record holder Mohammed Afsal, 2022 Asian Games silver medallist, is among the leading names in that pack while Asian Championships silver medallist Pooja is the leading name in the women's 800m pack.

India beat Kenya in AIU's list of ineligible athletes

100m NR-holder Dutee among offenders

NEW DELHI, PTI

India has surpassed Kenya to top the Athletics Integrity Unit's (AIU) list of ineligible persons due to doping violations with 148 suspended track and field athletes, which is two more than the African nation.

The latest updated list is for the period up to April 1 this year. Russia took the third spot with 66 suspended athletes.

Prominent Indian athletes in the list include women's 100m national record holder Dutee Chand, who has been serving a four-year suspension since December 2022, middle distance runner Parvej Khan, whose six-year suspension will run till July 2030, and Tamil Nadu sprinter Sekar Dhanalakshmi who was suspended for eight years in 2025.

The list includes persons serving a period of ineligibility as a result of national level cases and decisions.

It also includes persons who have committed non-doping violations such as tampering, evading testing, trafficking, or missing whereabouts, which carry the same penalties as a doping offence.

The Athletics Integrity Unit is an independent anti-doping watchdog established by the World Athletics. It has jurisdiction over international level athletes and their support persons.

In order to tackle the doping menace, the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) has taken up strict measures, including tracking down those centres in the country which are linked to the menace.

Asserting that trainers also play a big role in doping of their wards, the AFI has also asked all the coaches to register with it. Unregistered coaches will be blacklisted, and their trainees will be deemed ineligible for national awards.

After the 2024 Paris Olympics, the AFI has decentralised the national camps. Currently, the AFI is only conducting national camps for relay teams.

All other elite athletes have chosen private organisations like Reliance, JSW, Tatas or government departments like Army, and Navy for training.

Praggu held by Esipenko, Sindarov surges ahead

PAPHOS (CYPRUS), PTI: R Praggnanandhaa (**in pic**), the lone Indian in the fray, played out a draw with Andrey Esipenko, while Javokhir Sindarov maintained his winning momentum and defeated Hikaru Nakamura to retain a full-point lead after the fifth round of the Candidates Tournament here on Friday.

It turned out to be another dramatic day as Praggnanandhaa, who needed to win, opted for an unconventional opening not prescribed in the books. While the middlegame promised excitement, the Indian ace decided against taking any risks, and the game ended in a draw in just 31 moves via repetition.

Sindarov looks like a young man on a mission as he outclassed world No. 2 Hikaru Nakamura to race to 4.5 points from the first five rounds. Fabiano Caruana of the United States is the only one within striking distance after defeating Matthias Bluebaum to move to 3.5 points.

Praggnanandhaa, on 2.5 points, is next on the list and in need of a couple of wins, along with Anish Giri, who also settled for a draw with Wei Yi.

In the women's event being held simultaneously, Divya Deshmukh played out a draw with Tan Zhongyi of China while R, Vaishali was struggling to save a difficult position against another Chinese Zhu Jiner.

Anna Muzychuk of Ukraine, meanwhile, remained as the co-leader following a draw with Aleksandra Goryachkina of Russia as overnight joint leader BIbisara Assaubayeva lost to Russian Kateryna Lagno, who joined the Ukrainian in the pole position.

Result: Round 5: Open: R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 2.5) drew with Andrey Esipenko (Rus, 1); Fabiano Caruana (USA, 3.5) bt Matthias Bluebaum (Ger, 2); Hikaru Nakamura (USA, 1.5) lt to Javokhir Sindarov (Uzb, 4.5); Anish Giri (Ned, 2.5) drew with Wei Yi (Chn, 2).
Women: Kateryna Lagno (Rus, 3) bt Bibisara Assuabayeva (Kaz, 2.5); Tan Zhongyi (Chn, 2) drew with Divya Deshmukh (Ind, 2); Aleksandra Goryachkina (Rus, 2.5) drew with Anna Muzychuk (Ukr, 3).

Bengaluru FC's Renedy aims to go out on a high

ADITYA K HALDER
BENGALURU, DHNS

It's hard for anyone to understand the plight of Renedy Singh. Asked to step down as the Bengaluru FC coach last month to make way for incoming foreign coach Pep Munoz, the former India midfielder has once again asked to be the Man Friday due to the delayed arrival of his Spanish colleague.

And this time it's among the trickiest games of the season as they travel to Margao to take on Manolo Marquez's FC Goa at Fatorda. You ask Renedy what's his plan for his farewell match.

"The same old, I am not changing my philosophy just because it's my last match as the head coach. We attack as a team and defend as a team. Going out with three points would be nice but I would have aimed for that irrespective of the occasion," said Renedy at the pre-match press conference.

Asked to step down last month as BFC coach, Renedy Singh will man the team against FC Goa for one last time due to the delay in arrival of Pep Munoz. BFC

Perhaps, the possibility of going top of the table is keeping the fire inside the 46-year-old Renedy burning to continue in the role one last time as the coach has indicated that his future beyond this game at the club remains uncertain.

With just four points in the first three games, many were willing to write BFC off for the season. However, two victories and a stalemate against high-flying Mohun Bagan in the subsequent games brought the last year's runners-up back in the reckoning.

FC Goa, who have familiar faces like Sandesh Jhinghan and Udanta Singh -- are in no mood to give any respite as they sit just a spot and a point behind their fifth-placed rivals. Manolo, a known tactician, likes to keep the ball in his control much like Renedy but likes to keep things tight at the back first.

While they may have had to settle for draws in their last three matches, the Gaurs successfully fought back to restore parity against Punjab FC and Chennaiyin FC. On Saturday, however, fans can surely expect goals as the two clubs' encounters have seen multiple goals in the last six outings, out of which five have seen results.

Nikhat, Priya, Preeti punch their way into semifinals

ULAANBAATAR (MONGOLIA), PTI: Nikhat Zareen (**in pic**), Priya and Preeti Pawar qualified for the semifinals of the Asian Boxing Championships, assuring India of at least three medals here on Friday.

Nikhat was in complete control in the women's 51kg quarterfinal, sealing a first-round RSC (referee stops contest) victory over Xian Baguhin from the Philippines in a dominant outing.

Nikhat will face a stern challenge in the semifinals against China's Wu Yu, who won the 2024 Olympics gold medal.

In the women's 60kg category, Priya showcased composure and maturity to defeat China's Chengyu Yang 4-1. Priya will take on Mongolia's Namuun Monkhor for a place in the final.

Meanwhile, in the women's 54kg category, Preeti, the gold medallist at the World Boxing Cup Finals, produced one of the most clinical performances of the fifth day.

Preeti defeated Mongolia's Mungun Tsetseg with a 5-0 unanimous decision victory, setting up a semifinal contest against Im Aeji.

Meanwhile, in the men's 70kg category, Deepak exited the competition following a 1-4 loss to Jordan's Zeyad Eashash in the quarterfinals.

Lin through

Olympic gold medalist Lin Yu-ting won her quarterfinal bout at the Asian boxing championships on Friday in her first event since World Boxing said she passed a gene test to confirm her gender.

Karnataka emerge overall champs at Tribal Games

RAIPUR, PTI

Karnataka emerged the overall champions with 23 gold medals in the inaugural Khelo India Tribal Games where former world junior champion Komalika Bari's recurve women's archery gold for Jharkhand was the highlight of the final day proceedings here.

In addition to 23 gold, Karnataka picked up eight silver and seven bronze medals.

Karnataka's Manikanta L was the most successful athlete of the Games with eight gold and one silver while his team-mate Dhoneesh N bagged five gold and a silver for his effort in the swimming competition.

Karnataka led the medals tally from the opening day as they dominated the swimming events, winning 15 gold, five silver and three bronze medals. They added five gold in athletics and three in wrestling to ensure that neither Odisha nor Jharkhand could catch up with them.

Karnataka swimmer Manikanta L emerged the most successful athlete by clinching eight golds and one silver.

A whopping 106 gold medals were on offer across archery, athletics, football, hockey, swimming, weightlifting and wrestling while traditional sports like mallakhamb and kabaddi were demonstration sports.

Odisha were the only contingent to cross a half century of medals, finishing with 57 medals. Jharkhand were third with 16 gold, eight silver and 11 bronze.

Among the women competitors, Odisha swimmer Anjali Munda clinched five gold medals while Meghanjali of Karnataka finished with four gold and two bronze medals.

Bogey-free Kochhar lies T-2, Jeev makes cut

CHIBA (JAPAN), PTI: Karandeep Kochhar, one of the stalwarts of the Indian Golf Premier League, fired a second straight bogey free round was one shot off the lead with a six-under 65 at the USD 2 million International Series Japan.

Kochhar (67-65) is 10-under at the Par-71 course.

The only other Indian making the cut was the legend Jeev Milkha Singh (72-69), who produced a late birdie on the 17th to squeeze inside the cut line at 1-under.

Kochhar who had three birdies and no bogeys on Day 1, had five birdies and no bogeys in the second round.

The other Indians who failed to make the cut and they includes Gaganjeet. Bhullar (73-74), Shaurya Bhattacharya (75-69), Jyoti Randhawa (80-69) and SSP Chawrasia (77-79).

Aditi struggles

Aditi Ashok was the top placed Indian at Tied-58th spot after the first round of the Aramco Championships golf tournament in Las Vegas.

The Bengaluru golfer carded 2-over 72.

Among other Indians, Avani Prashanth, Diksha Dagar and Pranavi Urs were way down.

Avani and Diksha carded rounds of 3-over 75 to find themselves at T-71 while Pranavi carded 4-over 76 to put herself at T-90.

The projected cut is set at 2-over par and this puts Aditi on the brink.

Resilient Pegula reaches quarterfinals

WASHINGTON, AFP: Defending champion and top seed Jessica Pegula fought back to reach the WTA Charleston Open quarterfinals on Thursday, requiring a final-set tiebreak to see off Italy's Elisabetta Cocciaretto 1-6, 6-1, 7-6 (1).

A resilient Pegula, the world No. 5 from the United States, eventually progressed just a day after laboring more than three hours to beat 72nd-ranked Yulia Putintseva of Kazakhstan.

The latest hard-fought win, clocking in at just over two hours, was revenge for Pegula, who was stunned by Cocciaretto at Wimbledon last year.

Cocciaretto, ranked 43rd in the world, dominated the first set. Pegula's serve was notably wayward, with the American winning just 25 percent of first serve points. Pegula, who won the title in Dubai in February, next faces Russia's Diana Shnaider -- a 6-3, 6-0 winner over Canadian Leylah Fernandez.

Swiss third seed Belinda Bencic also advanced, after beating Czech Sara Bejlek 7-6 (7/4), 6-2 and line up a quarterfinal clash with fifth-seeded American Madison Keys.

Jessica Pegula

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Details	Location-wise quantity in MT per month						
	Bangalore	Dharwad	Mangalore	Harihara	Mysore	Gulbarga	Hospet
DH & PV Print waste & unsolds (Voucher & Office copies)	12	6	4.5	4	4	4.5	2
Mixed Print & Folded waste	3	1.5	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2
DH, PV, Sudha & Mayura White cut Peel waste	4	0.6	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.3
White Reel ends including core DH, PV, Sudha & Mayura	8	1.8	0.6	1	2	1	1
DH, PV, Sudha & Mayura Reel wrappers / Miscellaneous sweep / Bale pattie waste	6	2	0.9	1.2	1.2	0.9	0.9
Sudha & Mayura Print waste & unsolds - Magazine	1	0.4	0.9	0.4	0.6	0.9	0.05
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TENDER NOTIFICATION No. 39/25-26 Dt: 04.04.2026
(Through KPP Portal only)

Tenders are invited by "The I/c. Dy. General Manager (Materials)" for the following Tenders, detailed below:

Sl. No.	Description	EMD in Rs.
1	Supply of Sodium Cyanide 98 Percent Purity.**HGML/2025-26/IND0448**	14,10,000/-
2	Supply of Sag Mill full set of liners. **HGML/2025-26/IND0423**	9,77,000/-
3	Procurement of Food Kit. **HGML/2025-26/IND0469**	4,13,000/-
4	Design, Engineering, Supply, Erection, Installation & Commissioning, testing of 80 TPH Jaw Crusher in Primary Crushing Plant Including Civil works with connected equipment and other related works. **HGML/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT116**	6,16,000/-

Calendar of events: **(1)** Pre-Bid Meetings (Zoom): **18.04.2026 for Sl.No.1 at 10.30 AM, for Sl.No.2 at 11.00 AM, for Sl.No.3 at 11.30 AM and for Sl.No.4 at 12.00 PM. (2)** Last date for receipt of tender: **06.05.2026 at 4.00 PM. (3)** Opening of Technical Bid on: **08.05.2026 at 10.00 AM.** For further details interested bidders are advised to logon to website **https://www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** or contact the office of undersigned during working hours. For participating in the above tender bidder needs to be registered in KPP Portal.

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KULDEEP YADAV, DC BOWLER

Klaasen rules out international comeback

NEW DELHI, PTI: South Africa's swashbuckling batter Heinrich Klaasen has officially ruled out an international comeback, confirming his retirement to prioritise family time after toying with the idea for a brief period.

Klaasen, 34, had retired from all forms of international cricket last June, following his omission from South Africa's central contracts.

Despite experiencing "FOMO" (fear of missing out) during the T20 World Cup, said he is not returning.

In a video posted by the IPL on social media, Klaasen spoke with his Sunrisers Hyderabad team-mate Nitish Kumar Reddy regarding his future in the game.

"It was a thought for about two weeks. And then we decided against it," Klaasen said.

"Obviously, my family plays a big role in it. I've missed my friends when they did extremely well in the World Cup. But I had a little bit more FOMO, and I wanted to come back."

IN BRIEF

Hockey trials for Jr girls

▸ Hockey Karnataka will conduct selection trials to pick the state team for the 16th Hockey India Junior Women National Championship, scheduled to be held at Pune, Maharashtra from April 29 to May 10, reports DHNS.

Players born on or after January 1, 2007 are eligible to participate in the trials. The selections will be held at the Field Marshal KM Cariappa Hockey Arena on April 10 from 9.30 am onwards.

Suresh stars in BFHC win

▸ Suresh netted a hat-trick while Ashin and Rahul scored a goal each as Bangalore Friends Hockey Club beat Southern Alpha Sports Association 5-1 in the KSHA 'B' Division Hockey League Championship on Friday, reports DHNS.

Results: Bangalore Friends Hockey Club: 5 (Suresh 6th, 39th, 43rd, Ashin 45th, Rahul 48th) bt Southern Alpha Sports Association: 1 (Vignesh 46th); Dharwad District Hockey Association: 7 (Raghvendra 5th, Lokesh Ballari 7th, Mithun B 18th, 37th, Subhani 31st, Ankith 33rd, Aksha 41st) bt Bagalkote Jilla Hockey Association: 3 (Shubam 8th, Vinayak 14th, 45th).

Shivajinagar into quarters

▸ AD Kumar's late goal after an opener by Abhishek V (6th) and some help from Manu Kumar's 57th-minute own goal, Shivajinagar managed to hold BTM Layout to a 3-3 draw to enter the quarterfinal of the 2nd edition of the Chief Minister's Cup at BFS on Friday, reports DHNS.

Results: Shivajinagar: 3 (Abhishek V 6th, Manu Kumar 57th OG, AD Kumar 88th) drew with BTM Layout: 3 (Tharun S 4th, Jason Dinakaran 27th, Nivas S 42nd).

◆ ON TV ◆

CRICKET

IPL: DC vs MI **(3:30 pm)**, GT vs RR **(7:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports 1, JioHostar.**

FOOTBALL

FA Cup quarterfinals: Manchester City vs Liverpool **(5:15 pm)**, Chelsea vs Port Vale **(9:45 pm)**, Southampton vs Arsenal **(12:30 am, Sunday)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Ten 1, SonyLiv.**

ISL: Jamshedpur FC vs Mohun Bagan **(5:00 pm)**, FC Goa vs Bengaluru FC **(7:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Ten 5, SonyLIV.**

La Liga: Real Sociedad vs Levante **(5:30 pm)**, Mallorca vs Real Madrid **(7:45 pm)**, Real Betis vs Espanyol **(10:00 pm)**, Atletico Madrid vs Barcelona **(12:30 am, Sunday)**. **LIVE** on **FanCode.**

Punjab win battle of Kings

Priyansh's 11-ball blitz, Shreyas' fifty power visitors past CSK

CHENNAI, PTI

Skipper Shreyas Iyer's half-century, draped in elegance and aggression in equal measure was the centrepiece in Punjab Kings' five-wicket win over Chennai Super Kings in their IPL match here on Friday.

Shreyas (50, 29 balls) and his 59-run alliance with Nehal Wadhera for the fourth wicket helped Punjab end up at 210 for five while chasing a competitive 209 on a dew-less Chepauk night, also consigning the hosts to their second successive defeat.

It was Punjab's second win on the trot, but there were other heroes too on the night for the PBKS.

Chasing a target at a run-rate closer to 11 required consistent and calm run-making and that was what PBKS precisely did through their top-order, with just about everyone chipping in.

Priyansh Arya (39, 11 balls), Prabhsimran Singh (43, 34b), Cooper Connolly (36, 22b) all came up with mentionable contributions. Arya was quite brutal while vandalising CSK attack - Khaleel Ahmed was put away for a 4 and six while Matt Henry was dispatched for 4, 6, 4 in his first over that leaked 20 runs.

Punjab Kings' captain Shreyas Iyer played a dominant hand in a 59-run stand for the fourth wicket with Nehal Wadhera in a successful chase against CSK at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Friday. PTI

SCORE BOARD

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS: Samson c Prabhsimran b Bartlett 7, Gaikwad c Wadhera b Chahal 28, Mhatre c Chahal b Vyshak 73, Dube (not out) 45, Sharma lbw b Jansen 1, Khan c Wadhera b Vyshak 32, Veer (not out) 6. Extras (B-1, NB-1, W-15) 17. **TOTAL (for 5 wkts, 20 overs) 209.**

Fall of wickets: 1-14, 2-110, 3-123, 4-130, 5-168.

Bowling: Arshdeep 4-0-41-0, Bartlett 4-0-48-1, Jansen 4-0-43-1, Vyshak 4-0-38-2, Chahal 3-0-21-1, Stoinis 1-0-17-0.

PUNJAB KINGS: Arya b Henry 39, Prabhsimran (run out) 43, Connolly c Henry b Kamboj 36, Iyer c Chahar b Kamboj 50, Wadhera c Noor b Henry 10, Shashank (not out) 14, Stoinis (not out) 9. Extras (LB-1, W-6, NB-2) 9. **TOTAL (for 5 wkts, 18.4 overs) 210.**

Fall of wickets: 1-61, 2-95, 3-127, 4-186, 5-186.

Bowling: Khaleel 3-0-28-0, Henry 4-0-54-2, Kamboj 3.4-0-43-2, Noor 4-0-38-0, Chahar 4-0-46-0.

PoM: Priyansh Arya.

Arya and Prabhsimran cracked 61 runs in just 4.2 overs that gave a strong portend to the route the match was taking.

The Delhi batter was cleaned up by Henry to give a token relief to CSK, but none was more significant in PBKS's march than their skipper Shreyas, who unfurled his full range of shots.

Shreyas started a bit slow reaching 8 off 9 balls, as Connolly was doing the bulk of the work. But once the Australian fell to Anshul Kamboj, Shreyas took over the chase.

As expected, he hammered the spinners, and the shot of the innings was an inside-out six off leg-spinner Rahul Chahar.

Shreyas brought up his fifty in 26 balls with a boundary off Kamboj, but soon fell to the bowler, chasing a wide delivery.

Wadhera fell in the first ball of the next over to Henry as PBKS slipped to 186 for five from 186 for three.

However, that proved a minor aberration.

Earlier, Ayush Mhatre showcased his abundant talent with a 43-ball 73, powering the Super Kings to a competitive 209 for five. Mhatre and skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad (28) added 96 runs for the second wicket after Sanju Samson returned to the hut early.

Samson inexplicably moved down to the leg-side and tried to cart Xavier Bartlett's out-swinger over covers, but all he could manage was a healthy edge to Prabhsimran behind the wicket.

But his dismissal proved a minor jitter, as Mhatre tore apart Punjab's bowling with power and precision.

Pacer Bartlett was the aggrieved party early as Mhatre smashed him for three fours in a row - a loft through mid-wicket, a flick and a pull. His audacity helped CSK reach 57 for one in the Power Play.

Mhatre seemed to have put behind, at least for now, his issues against short-pitched balls, as the Mumbai young man later pulled Marco Jansen for a six.

Titans up against Sooryavanshi test

Gill's Gujarat host Royals on a batting 'paradise'

AHMEDABAD, PTI

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi

LIVE 7:30 PM

A pace attack comprising Kagiso Rabada, Prasidh Krishna and Mohammed Siraj does bear an intimidating look but the troika will have its task cut out when 'Boy Wonder' Vaibhav Sooryavanshi faces them on a batting featherbed with Rajasthan Royals starting as favourites against Gujarat Titans in an IPL match here on Saturday.

The season two of "Vaibhav Kand" has started with the 15-year-old demolishing the Chennai Super Kings attack for a 15-ball-50 but that was in a chase of 127 and against a poor quality domestic attack.

On Saturday at the Narendra Modi Stadium, Sooryavanshi will once again try to meet fire with fire but there will be three international bowlers of repute in Rabada, Siraj and Prasidh, who would like to test the batting flagbearer for the 'Gen Alpha'. For Titans skipper Shubman Gill, one would expect that he would take a few more prudent decisions unlike the opener in Mullanpur where Siraj was given only two overs and Prasidh was introduced as late as in the 13th over.

On the batting front, the track at the Narendra Modi Stadium is expected to be a paradise where one can hit through the line. The trend in the tournament so far has been to chase and Rajasthan Royals with Nandre Burger and Jofra Archer, two tearaway quicks at its disposal would like to ask probing questions to Gill, Sai Sudharsan and Jos Buttler first up.

POINTS TABLE

Team	P	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
PBKS	2	2	0	0	4	0.673
RR	1	1	0	0	2	4.171
RCB	1	1	0	0	2	2.907
DC	1	1	0	0	2	1.397
MI	1	1	0	0	2	0.687
SRH	2	1	1	0	2	0.469
GT	1	0	1	0	0	-0.509
LSG	1	0	1	0	0	-1.397
KKR	2	0	2	0	0	-1.964
CSK	2	0	2	0	0	-2.562

DC top-order in spotlight

NEW DELHI, PTI

Mumbai Indians will bank on Jasprit Bumrah's bowling prowess when they play their first away game of the season against Delhi Capitals at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Saturday. AFP FILE PHOTO

LIVE 3:30 PM

The spotlight will firmly be on Delhi Capitals' top order when they square off against a confident Mumbai Indians in their first home fixture of the IPL 2026 season here on Saturday.

DC, who shuffled as many as seven opening combinations last year, had hoped for greater stability this season, but early signs suggest the issue persists.

Chasing a modest 142 against Lucknow Super Giants in their opener, the Capitals' top order crumbled swiftly, with KL Rahul falling for a first-ball duck, while Nitish Rana, and Pathum Nissanka departed in quick succession, leaving the side tottering at 26 for four.

What followed, however, was a display of composure and maturity by 22-year-old impact substitute Sameer Rizvi, who struck an unbeaten half-century. Combining with the experienced Tristan Stubbs, the duo scripted a six-wicket victory with an unbroken stand that rescued DC.

While Rizvi's fearless stroke-play stood out, the vulnerability at the top is a concern, particularly against a Mumbai attack marshalled by the redoubtable Jasprit Bumrah.

Still in pursuit of their elusive maiden IPL title, the Capitals will be eager to see greater stability at the top.

They have the option of turning to either Abishek Porel, who displayed flashes of brilliance last season or the, mercurial Prithvi Shaw who struggles with consistency. In contrast, DC's bowling unit looked far more assured even in the absence of Australian quick Mitchell Starc, who remains unavailable.

South African pacer Lungi Ngidi continues to astutely use slower deliveries and T Natarajan, who has spent considerable time on sidelines due to injury, chipped in with a three-wicket haul against LSG, while Mukesh Kumar was economical. The spin duo of Kuldeep Yadav and skipper Axar Patel as expected applied the squeeze through the middle overs, ensuring the opposition never broke free.

This blend of pace variations and spin control will be key for Delhi against MI's power-packed batting line-up that includes the likes of Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav and Tilak Varma.

MI will enter the contest brimming with confidence after snapping a 14-year opening-match jinx with a record chase against Kolkata Knight Riders.

Rohit turned back the clock scoring a fiery 78, marking his return to T20 cricket in emphatic fashion.

'Agenda, jealousy driving strike-rate criticism'

KOLKATA, PTI: Kolkata Knight Riders captain Ajinkya Rahane has hit back at criticism around his strike rate, suggesting that there is a "certain agenda" and an element of "jealousy" behind the chatter.

Questions on his strike rate came up after KKR slumped to a 65-run loss to Sunrisers Hyderabad here on Thursday.

Chasing a steep 227, the home side never had any impactful partnership despite a promising start and folded for 161 in 16 overs to remain winless so far this season.

The loss placed the focus on Rahane's own performance and strike rate. The KKR skipper, who managed 8 off 10 balls on Thursday, was uncharacteristically sharp as he reacted to the criticism.

"My strike rate, I think I have one of the best strike rates so far from 2020. People who are talking about me, probably not watching the game or they have certain agenda against me. They don't like me playing," he said without mentioning anyone in specific in the post-match media interaction.

IN THE ZONE

Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Jacob Duffy (left) and Virat Kohli during a practice session at M Chinnaswamy stadium in Bengaluru on Friday, ahead of their game against Chennai Super Kings. DH PHOTO/ B K JANARDHAN

Abhishek fined 25% of match fee

KOLKATA, PTI: Sunrisers Hyderabad vice-captain Abhishek Sharma has been fined 25 per cent of his match fees and has also accumulated one demerit point for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct during his team's IPL match against Kolkata Knight Riders here.

He admitted to the Level 1 offence under Article 2.3 and accepted the match referee's sanction. For Level 1 breaches of the Code of Conduct, the match referee's decision is final and binding.

He scored 48 runs off 21 deliveries to get SRH to a flier in the powerplay.

SRH registered their first win of IPL 2026, with a thumping 65-run win, with Abhishek played his part with the bat, hitting four fours and as many sixes.

Nitish credits 'special person' for bowling transformation

KOLKATA, PTI: Sunrisers Hyderabad's India all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy has credited a "special person" for helping him rediscover his rhythm with the ball after a difficult, injury-hit phase but chose to keep the identity under wraps for now.

The 22-year-old all format player, who has been seen as a potential successor to India's premier pace-bowling all-rounder Hardik Pandya, has had his progress stalled by recurring fitness issues over the past year.

Multiple setbacks including a neck spasm, a left quadriceps injury in 2025 meant he missed crucial game time in the build-up to the 2026 T20 World Cup, where Shivam Dube eventually got the nod as the second seam-bowling all-rounder.

Reddy admitted that injuries had held him back from improving his bowling.

"It's always been a point that I wanted to work on my bowling, but it's just the injuries which I have gone through last year, I was not pretty sure that I didn't get the time to work on myself," Reddy said after being adjudged player-of-the-match in their win over KKR.

Father's flare-up: Yuvi says sorry to MS, Kapil

NEW DELHI, PTI

Yuvraj Singh

Distancing himself from Yograj Singh's angry outbursts against Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Kapil Dev, World Cup-winning former India all-rounder Yuvraj Singh has said that the controversial remarks of his father were "not okay" and he "sincerely apologises" for them.

In a podcast interview with 'Sports Tak', Yuvraj addressed the contentious issue of his father blaming Dhoni for his ouster from the national team besides claiming to have abused Kapil on selection issues in the past.

"I would like to apologise to Kapil and M S Dhoni about the comments because Kapil paaji has been a great player for India. What kind of relationship they (Yograj and Kapil) had, I don't know, I wasn't even born."

"And I have played with Ms Dhoni and had expectations about my relationship with him. But what dad said about him, I have told him that it's not okay.

"I told him 'it's not okay because things reflect on me. I have played with him, I would appreciate you not saying these things about him'," the big-hitting all-rounder, who was the hero of India's 2011 World Cup triumph, said.

Yuvraj said both Kapil and Dhoni are well aware that the comments of his father are in no way a reflection of his own thoughts.

Advani advances to semis

BENGALURU, DHNS

In the middle of a brilliant run in his maiden pool nationals, Pankaj Advani, winner of the 9-ball event three days ago, powered into the semifinals of the 10-ball championships at the Rotary Bhawan in Ludhiana, Punjab on Friday.

Advani carried far too many guns for reigning champion Shivam Arora in the quarterfinals. His lopsided 8-2 victory helped him set up a last-four showdown with fellow PSPB cueist Shahbaaz Adil Khan. The latter prevailed by a similar margin over Punjab's Sumesh Jhangra in the other quarters.

Pankaj Advani

The other semifinal will be played between Railways' Pushpender Singh and Aayush Kumar of Punjab. While Pushpender edged out Divya Sharma of Punjab 8-6, Aayush overcame Chetan Chabra of Telangana 8-7.

Results: (10-ball pool): Men: Quarterfinals: Pankaj Advani (PSPB) bt Shivam Arora (Mah) 8-2; Shahbaaz Adil Khan (PSPB) bt Sumesh Jhangra (Pun) 8-2; Pushpender Singh (RSPB) bt Divya Sharma (Har) 8-6; Aayush Kumar (Pun) bt Chetan Chabra (Tel) 8-7.

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Fresh and flawless through the summer
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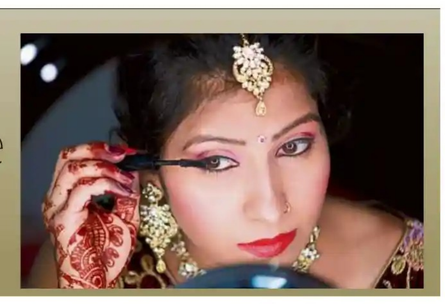

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Wknd. & SUMMER

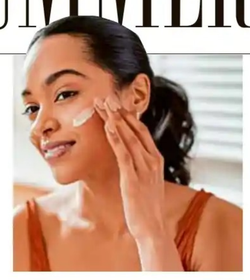
You need a good setting spray in the summer to ensure your make-up stays locked in place and lasts longer

GET SET

WEEKEND LIFESTYLE FEATURE

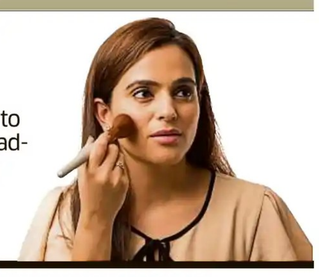
MAKE-UP HACKS

- Put on a broad spectrum sunscreen before make-up. Apply sunscreen after moisturiser and before foundation or primer
- Go for oil-free or gel-based moisturiser in the summer months
- Blotting through the day helps prevent shine in T-zone
- Choose products with water-proof formula to prevent smudging from sweat and humidity



ALL-DAY MAKE-UP

- Make-up sticks better on clean skin that's well-moisturised
- Use a mattifying primer for oily skin and hydrating primer for dry skin
- Gently press foundation into your skin rather than spreading it with a brush
- Do not pile on too many products



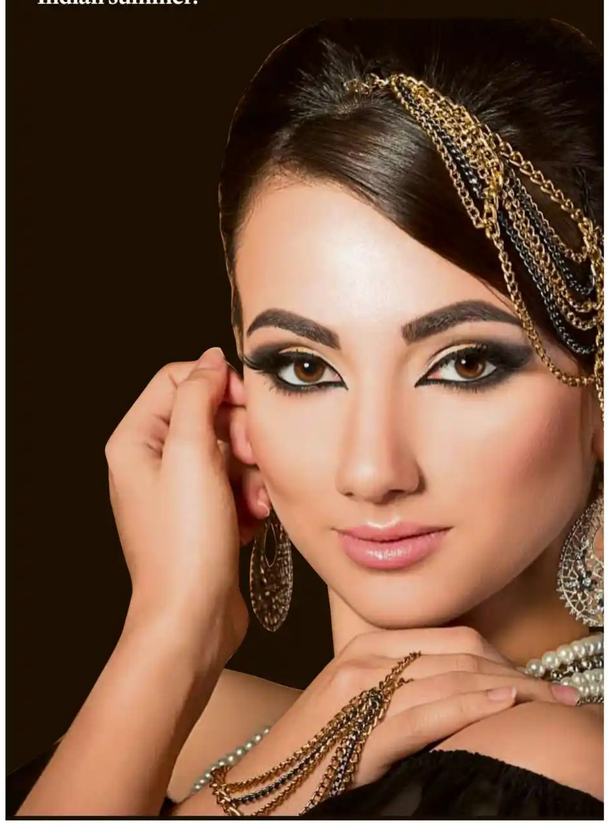
Fresh and flawless through the summer

Swatee Jog has some tips to help you get your make-up right this season

Indian summer is not just a season, it is a layered experience defined by warm weather, tropical delicious fruits, fragrant flowers and thunderstorms. It also poses some weird scenarios for make-up aficionados. The most challenging part is to maintain your looks while fighting the heat, dust, humidity and the ensuing sweat. But Indian women know well how to beat the summer blues.

The secret?

Choosing the right products and keeping your routine light, yet effective. The four essentials that can define your perfect summer look - lipstick, foundation, mascara and eye-shadow - need some deep thinking and concerted efforts to tide through an Indian summer.



Lipstick: Go light, stay bright

Heavy, matte lipsticks are so jaded and last decade. They can also make you feel uncomfortable in summer.

This year's runways flaunted natural-looking lips but in slightly bold shades. So, what's the choice with the finish of the lipstick and the technique of application?

Here are some pointers:

Tinted lip balm with blurred lip liner to get a natural bow shape that looks so neat and defined.

Glossy or satin-finish lipstick works like magic with high impact and low maintenance.

Hydrating formulae with SPF are best-suited for your outdoor activities, preventing chapped lips that need constant touch-ups.

Diffuse the lipstick with a dome brush for the day or simply go the lip-liner way in a slightly darker shade for glam evenings.

Jewel tones are still ruling the roost for heavy duty wedding and party looks, but they got a French address. Think roses, mauves and wine reds.

Shades such as coral, peach, pink and soft nudes work beautifully in the heat. They not only brighten your face but also feel effortless and breathable.

Foundation: Less is more

The already humid air merits something light and fresh for the skin, allowing it to breathe while looking soft and healthy.

A good primer prevents make-up from melting in the hot sun and sweat.

Here's how you get it right:

Go light: A light BB cream, CC cream or lightweight foundation, skin tint, tinted SPF or foundation compact powder works wonders.

Oil-free is advisable: Look for oil-free and sweat-resistant formulae that keep your skin looking fresh and dewy.

Natural finish: Choose matte or natural finish depending on your skin type.

If your skin is clear, even a tinted moisturiser with sunscreen can do the job. Don't forget to dab on a translucent powder to prevent caking.

Add to it the pink blush that's not going anywhere – even in 2026 – and make a bold statement.

Mascara: Waterproof is your bestie

Yes, we hear you when you say waterproof is easy to apply but hard to remove. But sweat and humidity can quickly ruin your mascara game and hence the solution.

Here are some tips:

- Use waterproof or smudge-proof mascara to avoid messy eyes.
- Avoid layering too much of the product to prevent creases and caking at the eyes.
- A single coat can open up your eyes and keep you looking fresh all day.
- Focus on lengthening rather than heavy volume so the lashes look thin but have a personality.
- Avoid false lashes and stick to original. Remember to curl the lashes before applying mascara for a natural lift without extra product.
- Don't forget to wipe off all eye make-up before you hit the sack. Use specialised products that are gentle and effective for the eyes.

Eye shadow: Soft, shimmer and minimal

Ditch the dark kohl and black eye look for the summer. This season calls for soft, easy-going eye styles. Think bronze or any shimmery metal that sticks. Use the special eye-shadow primer to avoid creasing after a few hours.

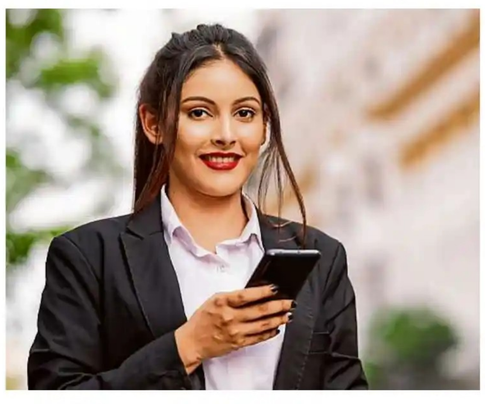
Here are some ways for a summer look:

- Go for neutral tones such as beige, peach, bronze and light brown.
- Cream-based or liquid shadows work better than powder in humid conditions.
- Add a hint of shimmer for that sun-kissed glow but don't overdo it.
- Use the same colour eyeliner to add depth and drama. So, your eyes steal the show - evening party, beach soiree or a fun day out with friends.

For that freshness all day...

Summer make-up is all about balancing the heat of the sun with the freshness of colours and textures. It's about enhancing your natural beauty while staying comfortable. Who wants constant touch-ups when in the midst of endless work? But looking good is also not optional, especially when it gives you that confidence and boost of energy when you look in the mirror.

When you choose lightweight, long-lasting products and soft shades, you don't just look good - you feel fresh all day long. So, this season, let your skin breathe, your colours shine and your confidence glow.



Beetle Bailey

I LIKE THIS NEW MOVIE THEATER...
BUT THESE SEATS ARE WAY TOO COMFY FOR YOU
Z
GREG+MORT WALKER
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JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

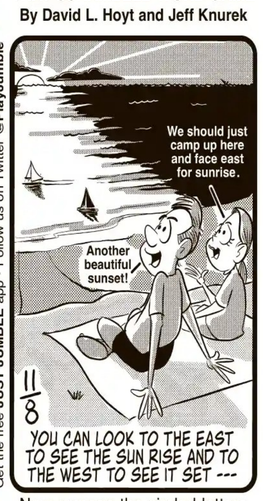
Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

DMYUD

ZTYIZ

UTLACA

RYEONR


We should just camp up here and face east for sunrise.
Another beautiful sunset!
11/8
YOU CAN LOOK TO THE EAST TO SEE THE SUN RISE AND TO THE WEST TO SEE IT SET ---

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

_____ _____ AND _____ _____

Answers: MUDDY TIZZY ACTUAL ORNERY

You can look to the east to see the sun rise and to the west to see it set — DAY IN AND DAY OUT

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HITORI-140

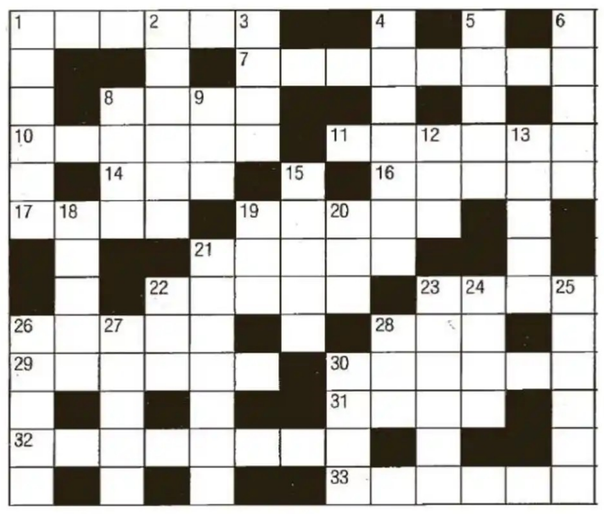
3	6	7	5	6	6	6	4
4	2	6	1	3	7	8	6
6	3	5	6	1	3	2	6
7	5	2	4	6	5	6	8
1	6	4	6	8	2	6	5
6	6	3	2	3	4	7	1
2	8	4	6	4	6	3	6
6	4	8	4	2	1	5	7

SOLUTION for HITORI-140

7	5	1	2	■	8	4	■
■	3	■	4	6	■	8	2
1	■	7	4	■	2	3	■
5	■	2	■	8	4	■	1
8	6	5	■	4	2	■	7
■	2	■	1	■	5	3	■
6	8	7	3	1	■	2	4
4	■	6	■	5	7	■	3

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 141



EASY

ACROSS
1 Humble (6)
7 From now on (2,6)
8 Enclosure (4)
10 Shuts (6)
11 Scanty (6)
14 Blokes (3)
16 Conceals (5)
17 Former Russian emperor (4)
19 Tribunal (5)
21 Frogman (5)
22 Filleted (5)
23 Solid (4)
26 Rope-making fibre (5)
28 Tap (3)
29 Tolerated (6)
30 Arm muscle (6)
31 Paper quantity (4)
32 Vacate (8)
33 Noisy breathing (6)

DOWN
1 Lucky charm (6)
2 Rubber (6)
3 Draws (4)
4 Non-metallic element (7)
5 Protect (5)
6 Hereditary units (5)
8 Unconscious state (4)
9 Information (3)
12 Intention (3)
13 Drain (5)
15 Lid (5)
18 Firework (5)
19 Flipper (3)
20 Colour (3)
21 Dreary (7)
22 Not good (3)
23 Appearance (6)
24 Article (4)
25 Muslim temple (6)
26 Rescues (5)
27 Musical instrument (5)
28 Pastry dish (3)
30 Make beer (4)

CRYPTIC

ACROSS
1 Shot a boozy bad egg (6)
7 Quickly, by arrangement, train on the rink (2,1,5)
8 What the bugler played as one sat randomly round the piano (4)
10 Wherein women may turn up, albeit possibly hard to view (6)
11 This upset Goering no end, but take no notice! (6)
14 It can easily get out of hand (3)
16 Do well at a good school (3,2)
17 Like a piper who got ratty when not paid (4)
19 It's heavenly for me to be in bed (5)
21 This model may be too fast for the raw beginner (5)
22 Half dead except at the start (5)
23 Drink that helps make a job rewarding (4)
26 Land of song when pitiful cries are heard (5)
28 It's useful to sailors and the horse artillery (3)
29 Is done, perhaps, for an inventor (6)
30 A season and a quarter for an Italian soccer team (6)
31 She lives on air, partly! (4)
32 Serious as bodily harm can be, initially (8)
33 A supporter, perhaps wiry if not wooden (6)

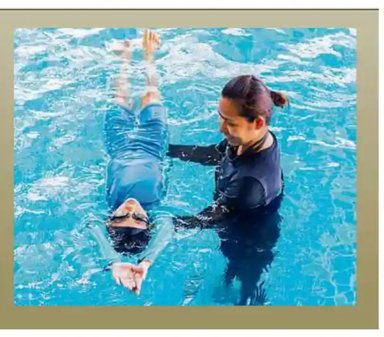
DOWN
1 When a swelling's risen, increase the price (4,2)
2 Arranged by degrees (6)
3 Spoil someone nice (4)
4 The kind of party Reg gets up will simply amaze! (7)
5 Mine contains half a loaf for the captain (5)
6 Land me in the money! (5)
8 Family plant? (4)
9 One disposed to help a learner at the piano? (3)
12 Full of holes, it may well be fishy (3)
13 Villainous ogre staggering round the community centre (5)
15 Person standing in for some drunken columnist? (5)
18 The Italian would need aid in translating it (being Greek) (5)
19 Where citizens can get advice on transport (3)
20 Satisfied the requirements of the police (3)
21 Swear to find a fresh answer (7)
22 He appears in the nude sometimes (3)
23 Clement arranged a binge at the Nag's Head (6)
24 Vermin? What a nuisance! (4)
25 Though not so hostile, the West has to rearm frantically! (6)
26 "Jam" the golfer may have use for (5)
27 Roman numerals much discoloured (5)
28 "Yes, right, you're the boss!" (3)
30 One thing to do when you break a bone (4)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 141

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 1, Bagged 7, In a tr-ice 8, Ta-p-s 10, Pu-rdah 11, Ignore 14, Eel 16, G-Et on 17, Pied 19, Co-me-t 21, Race-r 22, De-but 23, Brew 26, Wales (wails) 28, Sea 29, Edison 30, W-Inter 31, Ir-is 32, Grievous (GBH) 33, Hangar.
DOWN: 1, Bump up 2, Graded 3, Dish 4, Stag-gER 5, Pi-lo-t 6, Ye-men 8, Tree 9, P-a-L 12, Net 13, Rog-u-e 15, Locum 18, Il-iad 19, CAB 20, Met 21, Re-solve 22, Des 23, Benig-N 24, Rats 25, W-armer 26, Wedge 27, LIVID 28, Si-R 30, Wish.

EASY
ACROSS: 1, Modest 7, In future 8, Cage 10, Closes 11, Spare 14, Men 16, Hides 17, Tsar 19, Forum 21, Diver 22, Boned 23, Firm 26, Sisal 28, Pat 29, Abided 30, Biceps 31, Ream 32, Evacuate 33, Wheeze.
DOWN: 1, Mascot 2, Eraser 3, Ties 4, Sulphur 5, Guard 6, Genes 8, Coma 9, Gen 12, Aim 13, Sewer 15, Cover 18, squib 19, Fin 20, Red 21, Doleful 22, Bad 23, Facade 24, Item 25, Mosque 26, Saves 27, Sitar 28, Pie 30, Brew.

Wknd.



Too hot to run? Get into the pool

WORKING OUT P02

Show Buzz | Anirudh Ravichander

'I treat every track like storytelling through sound...'

From viral chartbusters to soul-stirring melodies, music composer and singer Anirudh Ravichander has redefined the soundscape of Indian cinema. Whether it was breaking the Internet with Kolaveri Di or rendering powerful music for blockbusters such as Jailer and Jawan, or creating background scores that elevate some of the biggest films in Tamil, Telugu and Hindi, Anirudh is undoubtedly one of the most influential composers of his generation.

On a visit to Bengaluru, the skilled artiste opened up about himself in a chat with **Ikyatha Yerasala**

You've delivered music for Tamil, Hindi and Telugu projects. How do you adapt your sound for different audiences?
For me, the emotion of a song is universal, language is just the vehicle. Whether it's Tamil, Telugu or Hindi, I start with the feeling the scene demands and the cultural rhythm of that audience. The textures, instrumentation, groove or vocal style may change, but the core energy remains mine. I've always believed that if a track has honesty and a strong hook, people connect regardless of language. My goal is to make something that feels rooted in the film's world but still carries that unmistakable pulse that is synonymous with my music.

When you begin composing, what's your creative process like?
I usually begin with long conversations with the director. I want to understand the emotional graph of the film, not just where songs appear, but what the characters are feeling in those moments. Sometimes, a melody comes instantly and sometimes, it takes weeks of experimenting with sounds and moods. I treat every track like storytelling through sound. Even the smallest sonic detail matters to me - the same way a producer obsesses over micro-details in the studio. It's about creating a vibe that the audience doesn't just hear, but feels.

With every release, there's massive anticipation around your music. How do you handle the pressure?
Honestly, I try not to think of it as pressure. If I constantly chase my previous success, I'll end up repeating myself. Instead, I focus on staying curious, exploring new sounds, new collaborations and new ideas. Every film has its own identity, and my job is to serve that. Of course, the expectations are huge and I'm grateful for that love. But the excitement of creating something fresh always outweighs the pressure of competing with my own past.

> Sometimes a melody comes instantly, and sometimes it takes weeks of experimenting with sounds and moods

Your upcoming projects include collaborations such as King starring Shah Rukh Khan and KH x RK starring Kamal Haasan and Rajinikanth...
Both projects are incredibly exciting because they push me into very different sonic worlds. One leans into a grand, larger-than-life soundscape, something that feels epic but still modern. The other allows me to experiment with textures and rhythms in ways I haven't done before. These collaborations are creatively very stimulating for me. When you work with visionary filmmakers and big personalities, the music naturally becomes more ambitious. I have many films coming up in Tamil, Telugu and Hindi. I'm working with the best of the best. The goal is to deliver them well in the next year or two.

When you're stuck creatively, what helps you break through?
I usually step away from the studio for a bit. Sometimes, inspiration comes from the most unexpected places, a conversation, a new artist I discover or even just listening to completely different genres. Music is everywhere if you're open to it. I also collaborate a lot with my team and musicians - bouncing ideas off people often unlocks something new. Creativity is like rhythm, sometimes you pause and then the beat comes back stronger.

What's your take on the use of AI in music?
Everyone has to learn how to use it in the best way possible. It is the future. Of course, it needs a human and creative touch to it. If you can get what you need through AI and if it makes your product better, then I see no wrong in using it.

One unexpected risk you took that taught you an invaluable lesson...
With the movies, every day is a risk as you're only as good as your previous movie. I just enjoy the process of making music.

Sports injuries in children

These injuries require a multi-disciplinary approach, involving medical care, physiotherapy, proper nutrition and structured rehabilitation, says **Dr Yogesh K**, Senior Consultant - Arthroscopy and Sports Injury, **Aster Whitefield Hospital**

Children are increasingly attracted to sports. School life includes sports and participation in competitions, and with a focus on making a career in sports too. However, like with any physical activity, sports also come with risk of injuries.

Sports medicine is a specialised branch that deals with injuries from sports, exercise and physical activity. These injuries may include sprain, fracture, concussion and ligament tear, raising concerns among parents, coaches and healthcare professionals alike. In recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in sports-related injuries among children, particularly in boys. The management of such injuries typically requires a multi-disciplinary approach, involving physiotherapy, proper nutrition, medical care and structured rehabilitation.

Causes of increasing injuries among children
Many children are engaging in intensive, year-round training in a single sport, focusing heavily on specific skills. This often comes at the cost of developing fundamental physical attributes such as flexibility, balance and overall conditioning.

Children are still in the development phase. Their bones and cartilage are growing, making them more susceptible to stress and injury. Additionally, children may not yet possess fully developed motor skills, which can further predispose them to accidents during physical activity.

Poor-quality playing surface, inadequate protective gear and lack of proper supervision by a trained coach increase the risk of injuries significantly.

Excessive pressure to perform high can lead to over-training and over-use of muscles.

Common injuries
Studies suggest that nearly 50 per cent of sports injuries in children are due to over-use of muscles or over-training.

The ankle is the most commonly affected joint followed by the knee, hand, wrist and elbow. Injuries can interfere with normal growth and may lead to long-term complications if not managed properly.

Treatment and management
The initial management of most sports injuries involves the RICE protocol. R - rest to avoid further strain of the injured area, I - ice pack to be applied every three hours for 20 minutes, C – compression bandage to reduce swelling and E – elevation of injured limb above heart level.

Dr Yogesh K

Effective treatment options
Physiotherapy: Modalities such as ultrasound and TENS therapy.
Pain management: Appropriate use of medications.
Rehabilitation: Gradual and guided return to activity.
Mental health support: Addressing emotional well-being.
Nutrition: Tailored diet to support healing and performance.

Preventive care
It is very important to manage a child's physical condition, understand stress-bearing capacity and provide protective gear as much as possible to prevent injuries. Also, in case of injury, children should not be rushed back into sports before they have recovered completely.

Coconutty coolers!

The harsh summer sun is no joke. But a twist to your traditional cooler can surely bring on a smile. Here are three you can try.

Lemon zing
Keep the entire tender coconut chilled to ensure the water remains fresh. Drink it with a few ice cubes and a squeeze of lime. Garnish with fresh mint sprigs for a burst of flavour. It's bound to get both your energy and mood up.

Fruity flavour
A mix of some thinly-cut citrusy fruits, mango and watermelon dropped into your coconut water is a great way to add hydration. Fruits such as watermelon are rich in water content and add to the cooling effect. It's a great fruity drink that can also be a refresher between meals.

Power blast
Swap your regular water for tender coconut water after your daily gym sessions. Add a spoonful of a protein powder. It works as a rehydrating and rejuvenating snack after your work-out.

Skincare for summer

Shilpi Madan gets a couple of dermatologists to spill the beans on how you can keep your glow intact in the harsh summer heat

Glow On

Make way for glow-getters in your vanity caddy and daily skincare routine to prevent grime from piling up with the rising AQI and mercury. Here's your summer skincare guide.

Go light
Minimise the product usage. Instead of layering on five formulations, make way for lighter lotions and gels that multi-task.

Says dermatologist Dr Madhuri Agarwal, "Change to higher potency sunscreen for added protection from the UV rays and bring in the body sunscreen to prevent freckles and sunspots from settling in. In summer you need a light, non-sticky feeling on the skin, instead of dense formulations that are winter-specific."

Trim the facial hair for a neater, spiffier look.

Face cleanser
"Use a light facewash, preferably in foam format," advises dermatologist Dr Kanta Barua. "Keep your skin clean and hydrated. Splash on water to keep it moist, and avoid the use of the face wash more than twice a day. This robs the skin of its natural moisture."

"Make way for oil control face cleansers," says Dr Agarwal. "Add a chemical exfoliant containing AHA or BHA to decongest the pores. It is a good idea to switch to a non-comedogenic, oil-free moisturiser. Swap to a higher SPF and PA factor sunscreen and try to reapply the sunscreen when outdoors."

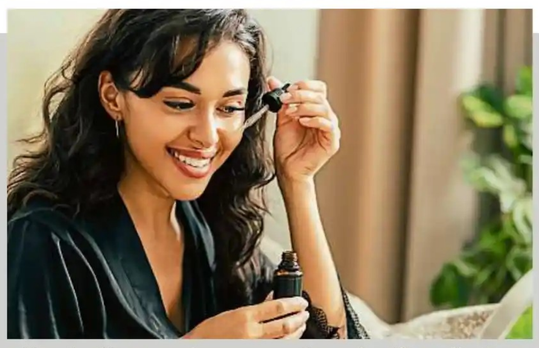
Lip care
Make sure you take care of your lips as well post the dry winter. An overnight lip mask hydrates them adequately. "Apply lip balm with sun protection during the day as lips also darken," advises Dr Agarwal.

Remember the lips bring in tender skin – desist from using lip scrubs with a vengeance to peel off the dead skin.

Cotton time
Invest in breathable fabrics like mul, cotton and linen to stay cool and sweat-free. "Carry an extra pair of clothes in case you have work outdoors or you sweat excessively. This will help relieve the discomfort of damp underarms and trickling sweat streams down your back," says Dr Agarwal.

Shower with luke-warm water (not cold showers) to balance the body temperature. Try to stay in a cool (not freezing) environment.

"Remember, you will move from chilled air conditioning to high levels of humidity outdoors many times in the day. This will aggravate the summer skin problems," she says.



- Use dusting powder containing clotrimazole to absorb sweat and beat infections.
- Keep your diet rich in fluid content – for example, fruits such as melon, green vegetable juices, coconut water and chia water.
- Minimise intake of spicy, processed foods to regulate sweat and other gland secretions.
- Do not self-medicate. Consult a dermatologist if skin problems persist.
- Tanning and acne are common summer problems tackled with carbon peels.
- Medi-facials cool the skin and clear up pore congestion.
- Laser hair reduction is recommended for summers to tackle body hair.

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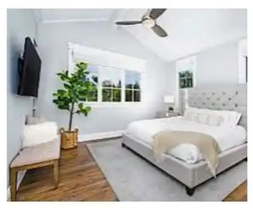
A bowl of ice placed in front of a table fan acts as a cooler and helps bring the room temperature down

ICE COOL

WEEKEND LIFESTYLE FEATURE

CROSS-VENTILATION COOLS THE ROOM

Open the windows on opposite sides of the room to allow air to flow through at night. This is especially effective if the breeze blows towards one of the windows and there are no structures blocking it. The airflow through the room cools it down naturally.



BLOCK DAYTIME HEAT

A room tends to stay warm into the night if the sunlight has been heating it up through the day. Use thick curtains or blinds to block the harsh sunlight, especially in the afternoons. Choose white or any reflective shade. They act as a shield against hot windowpanes and prevent the heat from getting trapped indoors.

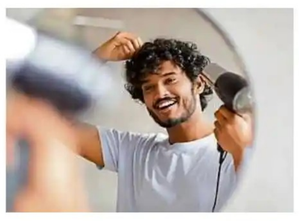
Summer **Care**

Too hot to sleep?

The summer nights are notorious for keeping people who don't have air conditioning up all night, leaving them sleepy and foggy through the day. Do you spend sleepless nights, unable to beat the heat? Fret not. Here are some easy ways for a good summer night's sleep.

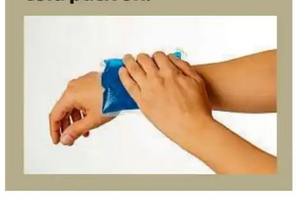
BATHE BEFORE BED

Make it a habit to take a bath in tepid water before going to bed. It helps your body release heat gradually. Lukewarm water gets rid of the sticky feeling you have from sweating all day and makes you comfortable and refreshed. Also, unlike in case of hot water, it does not induce more perspiration. It then helps you sleep better.



COLD PACK

Placing a cold pack or even a wet cloth on your pulse points – neck, wrists and ankles – helps your body cool down. It reduces the tension in your muscles, helping you feel more comfortable, which in turn induces sleep. However, the application time needs to be limited. It is not advisable to sleep off with a cold pack on.



Cool the sheets

It helps to chill your bedsheet and pillow cover before you get into bed. Put them in a plastic bag and place them in the refrigerator for an hour before your bedtime. The cool sheets keep you comfortable for some time and help you fall asleep. Natural materials such as linen are more conducive. Ensure your sheets don't get damp.

STAY HYDRATED

It's good to ensure you drink around 3.50 litres of water through the day. This helps in regulating your body temperature. You will not wake up thirsty in the middle of the night. Hydration through the day promotes quality sleep. However, avoid excessive consumption just before bed.

Too hot to run? Get into the pool

The summer is a good time to begin swimming, advises marathoner and fitness expert **Dr Gul Mohamed Akbar**

Working Out

As the mercury soars in summer, it is generally an off-season world-wide for distance running. Swimming is a very good cross-training alternative. It's a key strategy to boost performance, to facilitate injury prevention, strengthen neglected muscle groups while supporting muscle recovery. And simultaneously you develop a healthy cardiovascular system for weight loss and a toned physique.

For beginners

You need to begin with warm-up exercises for 5-10 minutes to increase blood flow and prepare the muscles for the swim. You can warm-up in the pool itself. Arm circles forward and backward, leg swings, torso twists, skipping and spot jogging are good warm-ups.

You need to cool down after the swim. This too can be performed in the pool itself. Slow swimming movement, kicks, leg stretches and a light walk cool you down. This will help reduce muscle soreness.

Also, immediately after a swim, take a shower to get the chlorinated water off your body. Use a good shower gel, shampoo, conditioner and a thick moisturiser.

Benefits of swimming

Stress buster: It is a very effective stress buster. The cool water of a swimming pool is an obvious choice for many to beat the heat, relax, and at the same time, get an effective work-out to burn calories. The calming sensation of the entire body immersed in water promotes mental relaxation and release of endorphins – feel-good hormone.

Improves lung capacity: The mandatory breath control required improves lung capacity while strengthening the respiratory system.

Improves sleep quality: As you switch to swimming, different muscles come into play, and it is a full-body workout. This helps increase the time and quality of your sleep. An eight-hour uninterrupted sleep is non-negotiable.

Radiation-free off-screen time: Since you cannot use the phone while swimming, the body is cut off from the radiation emitted by the mobile phone.

Hydrotherapy: This concept is gaining importance and popularity for general wellness and clinical rehabilitation while coming out of injuries for athletes from various sports. It helps improve strength, balance, mobility, speed, and all this with reduced pressure on the joints.

GET A COACH

It is very important to learn from a good, qualified swimming coach to ensure you develop the right technique and form, and to gradually improve your speed and endurance. A good coach will provide technical feedback, motivate, build confidence and ensure you meet your fitness goals – weight loss, toned physique, endurance - as well as help maintain consistency to maximise your fitness potential.

Pro tip: Your swimming gear should include goggles and cap. Apply sunscreen on your body 20 minutes before swimming along with leave-in conditioner on your hair. A shower before the swim and one after are mandatory.

POPULAR STROKES

Free style

Also known as front crawl, it is the most popular stroke. It helps in cardiovascular conditioning. It is also a good work-out for fat-burn. It is advised for full-body toning.

Back stroke

This stroke strengthens the back, shoulders and core. It also helps in improving posture. It helps you relax and increases your stamina too.

Breast stroke

This stroke is recommended to improve posture. It strengthens the core and back muscles, which also helps in maintaining a good posture. This stroke is known to enhance flexibility too.

Floating on the back

This is highly recommended for those who need to relax – both mentally and physically. It helps you calm down and increases your resistance to panic in stressful situations.

Watermelon wonders for the summer days

Deepa Natarajan Lobo has two recipes to help you cool off

Tongue **Tickler**

Nothing screams summer more than a chilled watermelon. Although it's available all year round, the joy of eating it in summer is unmatched. Juicy, sweet and naturally hydrating, it's the perfect antidote for those sweltering afternoons when you don't feel like eating anything.

While most people love the classic style of snacking on it straight out of the fridge, you can get creative and toss it into a range of dishes from desserts to savouries.

Here are two unique ways to celebrate the fruit this season - one crisp and savoury, the other indulgently sweet.

Tropical Watermelon Kulfi

By Banshbahadur Nishad, Executive Chef

A delightful fusion of creamy rabdi and fresh watermelon slowly churned into a kulfi, this indulgent treat is perfect for hot summer days.

What you need

- Five cups of full-cream milk
- 70 gm each of sugar for rabdi and watermelon syrup
- Two teaspoons each of fresh cream and ghee
- 500 gm of watermelon flesh (seedless)

Preparation

Pour the milk into a heavy-bottomed pan. Add sugar, fresh cream and ghee. Stir well. Cook on low heat, stirring occasionally to prevent scorching, until the milk reduces by half and thickens into a creamy rabdi (it takes about 45 minutes). Remove from heat and allow the rabdi to cool completely. Do not place in moulds while still warm.

Blend the watermelon into a smooth puree and strain to remove pulp. Cook the juice with sugar for seven minutes - until slightly thickened. Cool completely.

Mix the cooled syrup into the rabdi until well-combined. Pour into kulfi moulds and freeze for 3–4 hours or overnight until set. Unmould by running warm water over the moulds and gently sliding out the kulfi.

Garnish with chopped watermelon or a pinch of chaat masala and serve immediately.

Pic courtesy: Amara

Watermelon, Feta and Arugula Salad with Balsamic Vinegar

By Harilal Kumal, Head Chef

A vibrant celebration of summer flavours, this refreshing salad brings together the sweetness of fresh watermelon, the crunch of peppery rocket leaves and the creaminess of feta, finished with a classic balsamic drizzle.

What you need

- 20 gm of romaine lettuce
- 40 gm of rocket (arugula) lettuce
- 30 gm of iceberg lettuce
- 160 gm of fresh watermelon
- 10 gm each of cherry tomatoes and black olives
- 30 gm of feta cheese
- 40 gm of Greek salad dressing
- 5 gm of extra virgin olive oil
- 6 gm of flaked sea salt and freshly-ground black pepper
- 3 gm of aged balsamic vinegar

Preparation

In a large mixing bowl, combine romaine, rocket and iceberg lettuces with cherry tomatoes, black olives and watermelon. Season generously with flaked sea salt and freshly-ground black pepper. Drizzle with extra virgin olive oil and the Greek dressing, then toss gently until every leaf is coated evenly. Arrange on a chilled serving plate. Scatter crumbled feta on top and finish with a drizzle of aged balsamic vinegar.

Serve immediately.

Pic courtesy: Suzy Q

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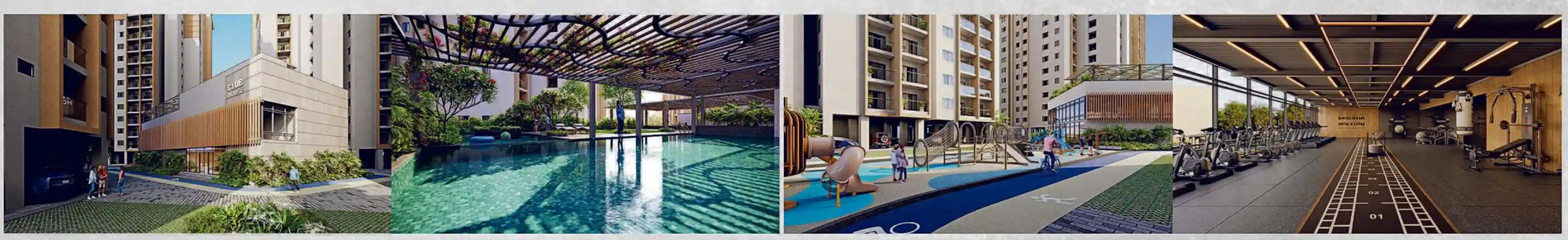

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BDA EAST FACING site 30'x43.5' for sale in BSK 1st stage, Srinagar, for price. 9845380312

BANASHANKARI 6TH Stage 1st Block. 30x40 Site For Sale Near NPS School. Brokers Excuse. 9686026739.

BANASHANKARI 6TH Stage 11th Block, 40x60 Site for Sale Behind 80 Feet Road. 9972338060/ 9880448478.

Basavanagudi

50X80 NORTH East Corner and 40x40 Commercial Property in Basavanagudi Buyers and Sellers Contact 8618373754

Basaweshwaranagar

SALE BASAWEHWARNGR 40x60 Site North Facing, Adjacent to Bharath gas. Contact Owner. 9480060249

Hanumanthnagar

40X60 NORTH and East Hanumathanagar, N/West N.R. Colony, 40x60 N/West Girinagar. Sellers/ Buyers Contact 8618373754

Jakkur

BDA PLOT for Sale 20x30, 30x40. at Jakkur in Arkavathy 7th Block. Contact: HN 9019144869.

Kempegowda Layout

KEMPEGOWDA LAYOUT, Commercial/ Residential BDA Site for Sale 20x30, 30x40, 40x60, 50x80 Contact Kumar 9945119449

Multiple Locations

BANASHANKARI 6TH Stage, Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Layout, Vishweshwariah, BDA Site, Houses are available. Contact: 9900999919.

Kengeri

FOR SALE: BBMP A Khatha Sites at Kengeri, 500 meters from the Metro Station with Cauvery Water. Contact: 9606342643

Nagarabhavi

NAGARABHAVI EXTENSION (Sri Gandhada Kavalu Vasathirahitara Sangha Site Nos. 119 & 120) Two adjacent Sites (Free Hold) 30x40 North Facing, Available for immediate SALE (Rs. 1.25 Crore each) Contact: 9986465377 Shivaswamy

SITE SALE, North Facing 40x60 Sqft Behind Namooru Tindi Nagarbhavi, No Brokers/ No Agents: 9448377834

Vishweshwariah Layout

SITE SALE West Facing 50x80 BDA 40ft Road Rs. 9000/- Vishweshwaraiah Layout Full White Money 9916826976

VISHWESHWARAIAH LAYOUT BDA 6th Block 20x30 West Facing 30 Feet Road Direct Owner Meeting 6360050356

VISHWESHWARAIAH LAYOUT 3rd block 30x40 BDA Site for Sale West facing Contact: 7349549087

2 BDA Corner Sites for sale Sir.M.Visvesvaraya layout, Bengaluru. 1) 8th block, site no.1460, odd dimension-1730 Sqft North west corner. 2) Site number-589 South west corner 4th block overlooking park-1743 Sqft. CONTACT OWNER -7349713114

Vidyaranyapura

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Residential/ Commercial

Multiple Locations

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9845488488

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Sites

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Multiple Locations

WANTED BDA Sites Arkavathi, Nadaprabhu Kempegowda & BDA other Layouts. Contact: SAPTHAGIRI (Opposite BDA Head Office):: 9036360366

Vishweshwariah Layout

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PERSONAL

Change of Name

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **NIRMALA NIRANJAN,** residing at # 58/1, G-10th Street, Jogupalya, Halasuru, Bengaluru-560008, have changed my name to **NIRMALA JANARTHANA SINGH** vide affidavit dated 02-04-2026 before notary Gangaraju B.N, Bengaluru. Henceforth I shall be called **NIRMALA JANARTHANA SINGH** only

I LALITHA BAI NAGESH. R/a, # 25/1-18, 9th Cross, Maranahalli palya, 2nd phase JP.Nagar Bangalore-560078 have changed my name from LALITHA BAI NAGESH to LALITHA BAI VENKOBA RAO NALIGE vide affidavit dated 02/04/2026 before notary Muhammad Hussain. K. Bangalore.

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